

Daypeace Encounter

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Category: How to Train Your Dragon

Genre: Family, Friendship

Language: English

Characters: Hiccup, OC, Stoick

Status: Completed

Published: 2012-11-08 17:44:21

Updated: 2013-01-17 17:06:40

Packaged: 2016-04-26 14:02:54

Rating: T

Chapters: 8

Words: 58,494

Publisher: www.fanfiction.net

Summary: The peace on Berk is shattered when a group of new dragons kidnap Hiccup. When an old friend from Hiccup's past appears on the island offering to help Stoick and the riders rescue him, they begin a dangerous quest for all involved. Meanwhile Hiccup is caught up in his own trouble hoping his old friend will come through for him. Can this old friend keep her promise to both groups?

1. Old Friend

_This is my first HTTYD fanfic and I hope that everyone likes it. I have seen the movie and watched the show so I hope I can capture the characters the right way. Remember to read and review. _

P.S. Please check out my profile to read my other works and to learn more about my original novel, "Battle for the Stars" available to be purchased online. Thank you.

* * *

><p>Dragons and humans have had a strained relationship for years. Until a few months ago no one thought it would be possible to befriend a dragon, let alone ride them. Now that we are friends we have much to share with one another about our ways of life. Still what would happen if an old friend from the past came back? Would be reuniting with them change the relationship you have with your new dragon friend?

It was a typical day on Berk. The village was a bustle of activity with the Vikings going about doing everyday things. Mothers were teaching their children, the men were at work providing, and the dragons were about doing their best to assist in the daily chores that kept the island running smoothly.

At Berk's Dragon Academy Hiccup and his friends were busy training with the dragons. Today, Hiccup thought it would be a good idea to

learn to share things about themselves with their dragons and for the dragons to do the same. He was hoping that the more they communicated with the dragons, eventually the riders would learn to actually interpret what their dragons were saying. It would be a huge step in the right direction to strengthen the bond between the people of Berk and their new dragon friends.

"Alright so this exercise is to help further the bonds of friendship with our dragons. Now who would like to go first? Anyone, come on don't be shy," Hiccup said encouragingly to his friends. He knew most of them, well Snotlout and the Twins, thought this was silly and he was pretty sure he already knew what Fishlegs and Meatlug were going to share, but he was determined to get the teens to open up more about themselves and the dragons at ease.

"I'll go first you big babies. Okay, when I was four years old I was playing with my dad's battle ax and I accidentally lost my grip on it. The ax went flying and it lodged itself in my parents' bed frame. I panicked and tried to pull it loose, but it was wedged tight. Just as I was about to rip it out I heard my parents come back. I was so startled I yanked extra hard and the ax came out and flew over my shoulder nearly taking my dad's head off. The bed was destroyed and my parents grounded me for two weeks making me do extra chores. Then my dad decided to teach me how to properly use an ax so I wouldn't destroy anymore furniture," Astrid admitted to her friends.

"You seriously cut your parents bed in half? That's so cool!" Ruffnut exclaimed.

"I bet we could have demolished more then just the bed. Hey we've managed to destroy three tables, two chairs, and a bunch of other half finished projects by the time we were four. It was a lot of fun," Tuffnut added, his eyes misting over as he thought of all the destruction they caused.

"The point is that's how I started my training to be a warrior. So Stormfly, did you ever do something similar to that?" Astrid asked her Deadly Nadder.

Stormfly grunted and nuzzled her rider. She stood up and started making low rumbles as she pantomimed flying and then stumbling to the ground. Her deadly tail spikes went flying embedding themselves in the far wall. The other dragons snickered and Stormfly gave them a hard look so they stopped.

"What is she saying? I don't really get the whole role playing exercise," Snotlout complained loudly.

"Isn't it obvious? Stormfly was showing us that when she was little and learning to fly she accidentally took a tumble and nearly impaled members of her flock. It must have been quite embarrassing," Fishlegs informed the other boy. Stormfly nodded her big head indicating that the husky Viking boy got it right.

"Me next! Okay when I first started reading, I couldn't get enough of it. I wanted to read everything I could get my hands on. So I snuck out at night to other people's houses to see if I could find new reading material. Well one time I got stuck tight in the back window of Mulch and Bucket's house and couldn't get free. I woke them with my screams. It took them and two Yaks to pull me out. To make matter

worse they didn't have anything read!"

"Yeah that's a travesty, isn't it?" Snotlout joked.

"It is! Vikings could become a lot smarter by learning to read more. Isn't that right Meatlug? Don't you enjoy learning to read huh?"

Meatlug rolled over and let Fishlegs scratch her belly and let out purrs of contentment. She rolled right side up and started sniffing Fishleg's back until the Book of Dragons fell out of his pants. She used her giant nose to open the book gazing fondly at the pictures of the Gronkles.

"Appears to me that Meatlug likes looking at the pictures more than reading the text. So this is going well. Who wants to go next?" Hiccup asked. He looked at his cousin hoping he'd be the next one to talk, but the Twins beat him.

"Okay, we've got a story right sis?"

"Yeah, we once dressed up as the other one and pretend the whole day we were each other! Man did we drive our parents crazy!"

"It was so much fun, and then you had to grow those stupid girly parts and ruin the fun!"

Ruffnut snarled and hit her brother in the head. He responded by slugging her in the jaw and soon they were both slugging it out, only for Belch and Barf to separate them. The Hideous Zippleback two heads hissed out a lecture and demonstrated what happened when you kept fighting. All you ended up doing is knocking yourself out.

"Seems that your dragon learned the hard way how to stop giving himself a headache huh? Okay my turn! When I was a little kid I never thought I grow up to be this hunky specimen you see before me. So I used to stuff my clothes with bags of flour in hopes to look bigger, but all I ended up doing was getting flour all over the house and making my mom angry. She chased me all over the house until she whacked me good with her rolling pin."

"So, did you stop using your mom's cooking supplies to buff up or did you move onto something else?" Astrid asked.

"Well, then I tried the laundry only to have her dump the wash basin over my head. Then my dad taught me some ways to muscle up fast and today I'm the best looking guy on the island! After all I have the best looking dragon on the island right Hookfang?"

The Monstrous Nightmare stood up preening and setting himself a blaze. Everyone stepped back and watched Hookfang's male display. He really liked showing off just as much as his rider did. Finally the dragon calmed down.

"So Hiccup, what about you and Toothless? What do you want to share with us?" Fishlegs wondered.

"Yeah make it something cool!" Ruffnut said.

"Hope its some interesting at least. Considering how much time you

spent drawing and working with Gobber you have to have a good story," Snotlout added.

"Come on Hiccup, what dark secret are you hiding?" Astrid asked.

Hiccup was about to respond, but Toothless beat him to it. The Nighfury was bouncing around and chasing his tail about. He was darting back and forth looking like he was playing two different roles.

"Oh I get it buddy. You use to play all the time with other Nightfuries. So you did have a family growing up. What happened to them bud? Why haven't we seen any other Nightfuries?" Hiccup asked his friend.

Toothless shrugged his shoulders and gave him a gummy smile. He made a few sounds and then just sat there for awhile. Hiccup didn't know what he was saying, but knew he'd eventually get the story. Hiccup got ready to tell his friends a secret of his when he thought he heard the scuffing of feet in the arena above. He quickly turned and looked up, but didn't see anything.

"Hiccup is something wrong?" Astrid asked, looking at her boyfriend in concern.

"I thought I heard something in seating area."

"There's nothing up there! Stop stalling and tell us a secret already!" Snotlout bellowed.

"I'm not stalling! Okay, um when I was younger I use to have an imaginary friend. Her name wasâ€|. " Hiccup started to reply, but the other teens were laughing and their dragons were mimicking them.

"This is too funny! You had an imaginary friend and it was a girl? What couldn't think of any trolls to befriend? Oh that's right you did!"

"Man, you must have really been lonely to want a girl's company! Ow what was that for?"

"What's wrong with being a girl? I hit harder then you do!"

"I think it's sweet that you had an imaginary girlfriend. You'll have to tell us more about her some other time. It's a beautiful day, let's go flying!"

Everyone agreed and they mounted their dragon taking off. As they were leaving Hiccup swore he again saw someone in the seats, but when he blinked they were gone. Rubbing his eyes, he told Toothless, "I need to get some more sleep buddy. I'm starting to see things. Come on lets go show the others our new trick!" Toothless crooned and flew off after the others eager to show off.

In the seats above the arena a figure stepped out the shadows silently thanking the gods that no one had noticed her presence. The figure pulled the gray cloak with white trim tightly around her body before jumping through the cage roof and onto the arena floor

effortlessly. The figure strolled over to the doors that use to cage the dragons and rested her hand over it for a few minutes.

A little while later she removed her hand satisfied by whatever she did. She looked around the arena examining the new layout smiling that all the weapons had been removed and water troughs, sleeping mats, and barrels of food had replaced it. Clearly the teenagers were trying to make their academy more dragon friendly. After a few more minutes of looking around she turned and left hoping to catch up with the riders. The silhouette of a dragon could be seen soaring across the sky heading for the woods.

A short time later the dragon landed in the woods and a few minutes later the figure could be seen climbing the tree to get a better look at the riders. She giggled softly at the antics of the Twins and had to hold back a full scale laugh as Hookfang buried his rider in a ton of mud. It seemed that Hiccup had lead the others into the forest for more bonding exercises, this time to see what dragons liked to do for fun.

The riders didn't know they were being watched. They were all just having a good time playing a game they termed, "Storming the Dragon's Nest." The dragons were guarding a large pile of fallen timber, pretending it was a nest full of hatchlings. The Viking teens were suppose to come up with ways to get past them, snatch the egg and make it out alive. It was game that dragons played to sharpen their reflexes and form familiar bonds with pack mates.

"Get down already! We've seen what charging straight on does, all you end up is a face full of ash!" Astrid hissed, pulling Snotlout under some brush.

"I'm a Viking we charge through anything! Come on its only four of them and six of us. We can take them! Whoa, hey watch where you're swinging that tail Hookfang!"

"Why don't we try climbing the trees and jumping on top of them? We could catch them by surprise?" Ruffnut suggested, actually helping out for once.

"Nah, the dragons would see us coming. They're always looking up incase another dragon tries to slash them in half!" Tuffnut argued.

"We could circle around back and try to take the nest from behind. No that wouldn't work Stormfly would hear us coming and just shoot her tail spikes at us," Fishlegs moaned.

"Toothless is the one guarding the nest itself. No way would he let us sneak in close enough to snatch the egg. This game is impossible!" Astrid grumbled frustrated.

Hiccup turned to tell her to calm down and he'd think of a plan when a snapping of a branch distracted everyone. The snapping startled the dragons whom turned to look at what caused the noise, only for more branches to snap all around them confusing them terribly. "What's causing that noise? It doesn't sound like anything I've heard before."

"Maybe it's a group of Terrible Terrors looking for food? They like

to explore the woods for scraps," Fishleg's suggested. He let out a scream as shadow darted past some of the trees in the distance.
"I think these woods are haunted!"

Ruffnut smacked him upside the head telling him to get it together. Noticing the dragons were now clearly agitated the riders took advantage and rushed the nest, slipping past their friends and claiming their prize. The game was over and the dragons let out roar of frustrations they had lost. Toothless seemed especially miffed; scratching angrily at the ground and looking ready to blast anyone who came near him.

"Calm down bud, it's only a game. You'll win next time. We should really head back to the village. My dad and Gobber are helping to install the new dragon shelters today and they said they could use some help. We'd better go before he sends Thornado to collect us. I don't know about you, but I don't want to lose my hearing because of a Thunderdrome's bellows."

The others agreed and mounted their rides heading back to the village. As they left Hiccup and Toothless circled around the woods twice trying to figure out what snapped those branches, but couldn't see anything. Dismissing it for later they left not spying figure crouching on a tree branch.

"Hmm shelters for dragons? This is something I have to see for myself. I better take a shortcut and hope that mean old Mildew doesn't spot me," the girl whispered to herself. Tightening her cloak she made her way back to the village carefully crossing the farmland belonging to Mildew.

For the rest of the day the strange figure hid out observing the changes to the village with skeptical, but excited eyes. It seemed that much change had come to Berk since her last visit months ago; if the way people were interacting with Hiccup was any indication he was the one responsible for the change. It made her heart swell with joy as she saw the positive interaction between Hiccup and his father, Stoick, as they with Gobber's help finished the first home for a group of excited Gronkles. The way Stoick was praising his son for his designs on the shelters showed how proud he was of his child. That was something the figure had never seen before.

Later that night, when the villagers had all fallen asleep and the dragons were slumbering deeply the figure crept silently towards the chief's house. Pausing to listen to the sounds in the house, the figure was reasonably certain it was safe to enter. Hoisting herself up through the window she slipped inside the house careful not to make a reverberation.

The fire warmed her skin as she maneuvered past the sleeping chief. He was talking softly saying a name over and over again, but she couldn't make it out. She saw two swords, an ax and a small dagger on the table shining after being polished. It appeared that the chief had been doing routine care on the family weapons before going to bed. If he was taking care of Hiccup's dagger, that had to be a good sign about the improved relationship, between father and son.

The figure made her way towards Hiccup's bed, shivering slightly as she passed the dozing Nightfall. She hesitated in front of the dragon for a bit, almost scared to go past him, but with determination

strolled past him standing next to Hiccup's sleeping form. Though her face was hidden, one could sense how sad she was by the sight of the prosthetic. Gently she stroked the teens head seeming to enter a trance.

Hiccup was dreaming that he and Toothless were exploring the nearby islands searching for more Nightfuries. Just beyond the fog he could hear sounds of happy dragons chatting with one another. "You hear that bud? We've finally found the rest of your family! Aren't you excited?"

Toothless let out a slight purr and a growl of agreement. He spread his wings to their full length as Hiccup opened his tail fin. They banked high into the clouds expecting to see more Nightfuries only for Hiccup to end up by himself standing in a grassy field. "Okay this is strange. One minute I was with Toothless now I'm in a meadow. Either I've gone crazy or I'm dreaming."

"_I would highly suspect it's the second one Hiccup. After all you usually dreamed up this place for us to play in when you were little," a melodious female voice whispered behind him. Hiccup whirled around a little shocked, but happy to see the cloaked female standing there. "Did you not expect to see me again? After all you were the one who brought me up today to your friends."_

"_Yeah, but I never finished telling them about you Nissa. Then again I wasn't going to admit that up until a month and half before I battled the Red Death that I still regularly talked with my imaginary childhood friend. What are you doing here now? I haven't thought about you in months!"_

"_Really, I'm the product of your imagination, to ease your loneliness and support you through your struggles, and your wondering why I've returned now? Hiccup, from what I seen you don't need me anymore. You have real friends, both human and dragon. Your father is showing you respect and love, the village is happy to have you around. I'm not needed anymore," Nissa replied pleasantly. She moved closer taking his hand in hers careful to keep her cloak around her. "I'm so proud of you Hiccup."_

"_Yeah well, thanks," the teen said blushing furiously. "You know I never would have had the courage to try to make friends, especially with a dragon if you hadn't taught me to look beyond what I see. Really, I owe you everything for helping me become the person I am today."_

"_I didn't do anything you didn't think up first remember? I just helped you figure out you could do it yourself. That's why I came to say goodbye. You don't need me anymore. I'll miss you, but if you ever think you need me or want to remember the good times just," Nissa stilled and suddenly the world around them vanished._

Hiccup woke up with a start as Toothless jumped on top of him snarling and generally making a ruckus. "Whoa bud stop, what's gotten into you? Hey get off me! Look what you did this place is a mess!" Hiccup's art pads and several of his inventions were scattered across the room. He heard his father demanding an explanation for being woken up in the middle of the night.

"Its okay Dad, something just set off Toothless. He probably had a

bad dream. I'll pick up everything why don't you go back to bed?"

"Alright, but be quick about. I don't want anymore interruptions got it?" Stoick shouted, before going back to bed.

Hiccup and Toothless quickly picked up the room. As they did the boy noticed something that caused him to frown. There were faint outlines of shoe imprints in the dust that didn't belong to him or his dad. Also a page from one of his old art journals was torn out and a single grey thread was snagged on his window. Confused he looked outside the window, but couldn't see anything.

"Someone else was here weren't they bud? We'll get the others and investigate tomorrow," Hiccup told his dragon friend. Toothless nodded as the faint scent he picked up made him highly uncomfortable. He didn't know what it was from, but whatever it was certainly made him nervous.

In the cove on the other side of the island the figure, now known as Nissa, was fighting to catch her breath. That Nightfury had woken and she had to make a hasty retreat. She feared what would happen if the villagers found her unusual tracks in the morning. Hopefully she would be long gone by then. Removing an opal mirror from her cloak pocket she touched its surface activating its powers. "My Queen; I bring you news about the possible recruit we marked fifteen years ago."

"What's the update child? Is our recruit still miserable and lonely as before? What is his state of physical health? Will he be ready to travel when the Guard arrives?"

"My Queen; please hear me out. Things have changed here in the short few months of my absence. Hiccup has friends now, a good relationship with his father. He's showing the people of Berk a new way of life. I suspect he's even got a girl. It would be wrong to take him away from all of this. I don't think we shouldâ€|"

"Silence child! A few months of happiness can't make up for years of misery and abuse. We marked him long ago because he was different than the people of Berk. If it's taken them this long to figure out his worth, well then that's their loss. We need him Nissa, you know that!"

"My Queen, without him here all this progress could fall apart. The other riders need his guidance to help ensure peace. Surely there is another way. What aboutâ€|"

"ENOUGH NISSA! You know very well why we need Hiccup and what's at stake if your mission fails. I know that you have qualms about this and I myself wish we didn't have to suspend our morals and our primary purpose, but if we are to survive, to continue our dreams of peace for the world, the boy needs to be brought back to our home. The Honor Guard will be arriving in two days time. When they arrive you will assist them with bringing the boy back. Our time is running out."

"I know My Queen, we only have one lunar cycle to succeed and the new moon is in two days. I'll be ready for when they arrive. I'll talk to you when I get back. Nissa out. Oh Gods please forgive me for what

trouble I will cause."

The next day the riders were investigating the area outside Hiccup's house searching for any signs of the intruder. So far they weren't having much luck. "Are you sure there was someone in your house last night? It was pretty late and you were half asleep. Maybe you just dreamed it all up," Astrid told her boyfriend.

"I didn't imagine the footsteps. What about the thread and missing page from my art journal? Are you going to say I just imagined them as well?"

"Well you did say you had an imaginary friend when you were little. Why not imagine evidence huh?" Snotlout barked. "This is dumb, I bet your dragon just went crazy and we're wasting our time looking for something that doesn't exist!"

"So does that mean these footprints I found aren't real?" Tuffnut stated. Everyone rushed over to see what he found. There in the damp earth were human footprints. The shape and depth of them indicated a female, but what really got them, was the imprint by the show didn't resemble Viking footwear. "What did I discover something important? Whoa that's a first."

"These are definitely fresh and I don't know anyone on the island who wears this kind of shoe. We may have an intruder on the island," Fishlegs exclaimed nervously.

"We should follow the tracks. Maybe we'll find whoever was in your house last night and give them a beat down!" Ruffnut said a grin on her face at the thought of beating someone up.

"We do need to confirm there's an intruder before we bring it to your dad."

"Let's go. I want to know why someone was in my house." The riders mounted their dragons and followed the faint tracks until midway into the woods. When they came to a clearing the tracks just stopped, well sort of. There weren't anymore human tracks those had vanished. Instead there were signs of a dragon instead.

"So a dragon landed here and took off with the mysterious intruder? That would make sense. Maybe some other tribes in the area have figured out how to ride dragons," Astrid suggested.

"I don't know it just seems very strange. Look at these tracks. Something funny about them, but I just can't figure out what," Hiccup mused. There was something about the tracks that bothered him and he just couldn't figure it out.

"The tracks don't resemble any dragon listed in the Book of Dragons. Whoa another new species! This is so epic!"

"Are we going to have to study it again? The last time we nearly broke the baby."

"Hey, whoa calm down will you Hookfang! I don't know about you, but the dragons are really agitated by the tracks. Maybe they know what they belong to."

"Do you know whose tracks these are bud? Can you tell me?" Toothless let out a series of growls and hisses, scratching at the ground furiously, but Hiccup couldn't understand what he was trying to say. They decided to head back to the village and inform Stoick what was going on.

When Hiccup arrived home, he saw his father had an ice block to his head. "What's wrong Dad? Did something bad happen today?"

"I just got a headache from listening to Mildew's newest list of grievances. He was here early going on and on about how the dragons were sneaking around his house last night keeping him up. He also accused them of stealing his cabbage and ruining the side of his house when he chased it away. I had Mulch and Bucket take a look, but there was no evidence of any dragon activity. Try explaining that to the old man! Ugh, I don't know if I can handle anymore bad news."

"Um Dad, I really hate to bother you, but I have something to tell you. Last night, a bad dream didn't wake up Toothless. There was an intruder in our house."

"Impossible! If there was an intruder I would have sensed it and woke up! Thornado would have been making a lot of ruckus if someone ran from our house. Are you absolutely certain son?"

"Yeah, some stuff of mine is missing and there was this thread caught on the window. My friends and I tracked the intruder to the woods, where it appears they got on a dragon and left."

"Appears? Your not sure if they rode a dragon or not?"

"Something about the tracks were funny, I just can't figure it out. Dad, if this intruder does have access to a dragon we need to find them and fast."

"I let Gobber know what's going on. I'll have extra patrols and have the clans search the woods. If someone is here spying on us, we'll capture them before they can cause too much trouble. Don't worry son it will be okay."

"Yeah I hope you right."

The next day at sunset the teens and their dragons were resting at their hangout perch overlooking the sea. So far the patrols hadn't found any signs of the intruder. Nothing else had turned up missing and it appeared that whoever the mysterious person was had vanished.

"So they haven't found any signs of the intruder? Isn't that a good sign?" Fishlegs asked.

"How's it good if one our enemies sent a spy here and we couldn't flush them out? We could be looking at war soon!"

"Yeah we get to blow up more stuff!"

"I can't wait to beat up someone!"

"Don't worry Astrid I'll protect you and Stormfly. Right

Hookfang?"

All the dragons roared excitedly. They were much more relaxed than they were yesterday. Well everyone, but Toothless. He kept pacing around and keeping an eye on Hiccup, who was trying to reassure him everything was alright.

"Its okay buddy, I'm sure that Dad will catch the intruder soon. We just have to be patient," Hiccup assured him. He looked at the sunset sky enjoying its beauty. The dark reds mixed with the pinks, orange, and purple with a tinge of fading yellow sunlight. It was a sight to behold. Suddenly something large blocked out the sun. "What in the world? Did you see that?"

"Look! What are those?" The teens and the dragons looked up in the sky shocked to see the fading light blinding them as it bounced off the dazzling scales of approaching dragon pack. The whole village was in shock just standing there as nine dragons appeared in the sky above Berk.

It was hard to see any details in the fading light and with the sun blinding them all they could really tell is they were medium size dragons with mostly pink scales. The nine split up into pairs of two with a single dragon doing loops around the village looking for something. Upon spotting the teens, the lone dragon let out a roar to its friends. That's when things got crazy.

Two dragons flew low close to the square. They opened their mouths and let loose a blue flame that engulfed much of the square. When the flames burned up dragon and human alike were slumped to the ground with dazed looks on their face. Some were even snoring.

"Everyone to your dragons now! We need to drive these intruders into a corner. Get the children inside! Don't forget your weapons ahhhhhhh!" Stoick bellowed. Another strange dragon zoomed past doing a loop before breathing a bright orange flame around the army. Instead of burning it formed a barrier of sorts cutting the Vikings off from their weapons.

The partner was locked in battle with a small group of Terrible Terrors and some Deadly Nadders dodging their spikes and fireballs. It twisted around heading up before doing a back flip over the attacks and hitting them from behind with a burst of fire.

The other four dragons were also engaged in battle with the Vikings who had managed to mount their dragons. It was chaos in the skies as Stoick riding Thornado blasted them with the deadly sound waves. On the ground the other adults were launching the catapults trying to knock the dragons from the sky. The four scattered and started flying in different formations confusing the people of Berk.

These new dragons kept spewing different colored flames with interesting results. It seemed that if you got touched by a pale yellow flame several of the Vikings seemed to lose their battle skills or the dragons fell in the air. In contrast when golden yellow flames bathed the intruder dragons their speed, strength, and intelligence went up. They were attacking in perfect harmony handling everything that was thrown at them.

The single lone dragon was doing battle alone against the riders. It

had already got Hookfang and Snotlout trapped between some rocks and flipped the Twins and their dragon with it's flatten tail tip. Astrid and Fishlegs were next as the pink dragon hovered in the air waiting for them to strike. At the last instant it dove to ground so Fishlegs and Astrid were knocked to the beach and their dragons landed in the sea.

The pink dragon was sad as she watched what her kind had brought to Berk. There was no joy in hurting humans and dragons. The sounds of an approaching fireball forced her to roll over, just getting grazed in the shoulder by the Nightfury. Letting loose a roar she took off flying as fast as she could. Looking over her shoulder she saw Toothless and Hiccup increasing speed as they went after her. With that in mind she headed off to the areas were they did trick riding.

"Come on boy, you can catch up to her! Maybe if we can corral one of them we can figure out what this attack is all about."

Toothless bellowed in agreement as they zoomed through arches, twisted around several rocky outcroppings and before zooming high into the clouds above. Toothless let out a growl chasing after his elusive prey. Higher and higher they climbed getting closer and closer. Suddenly they were above the clouds, the last few rays of light outlining them. He growled and sniffed trying to scent his prey, but the female had vanished.

"Its okay bud, its okay. We'll find her later. We should head back to Berk," Hiccup suggested as they flew back to the island. He was keeping a lookout for any signs of the dragons. They arrived back at the island and saw the remaining eight dragons hovering about as if waiting for a sign. "What do you think they're waiting for bud? Why did they come here? What could they waaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaannnnnnnnnnnnnnttttttt!"

The female dragon had appeared out of nowhere and snatched the teen boy right out of his saddle. Toothless started to tumble, but somehow managed to right himself and tried to glide after the female, but he couldn't control his tail fin properly. He ended up crashing into Gobber's forge.

"Let me go! Why did you grab me! I said let me go!" Hiccup shouted, struggling to break free, but the female's grip was tight. She let out another ball of orange, signaling the mission complete. The other eight dragons broke off the attack and flew into the sunset disappearing with Hiccup.

Stoick ordered a pursuit, but many of the dragons were injured and they discovered several of their boats had leaks in them making them unseaworthiness. As night fell and everyone tried to recover, the angry father vowed by the moonless sky he'd get his son back no matter what the cost.

2. Capture and Explanations

_ A special announcement I would like to make. I am pleased to announce that I have posted on my deviantart page pictures of Nissa and her special form as you will read in this chapter. Click my profile and follow the link to see the pictures. Enjoy!_

The people of Berk were slowly recovering from the surprise visit from the new dragon species. The people who had been struck by the strange colored flames had recovered remarkably quickly. The only residual effect from the flames seemed to be a slight headache and some memory loss. The injured dragons had also recovered.

Once the boats had been repaired Stoick had ordered patrols to look for Hiccup. They had been searching for almost a week, but still there was no trace of the mysterious dragons. Nothing in the Book came close to the blurry outline they had seen. One thing was certain though. The dragons, especially Toothless seemed to have some idea what those new dragons were, but without anyone to communicate what they were and where they lived, it was impossible to find Hiccup.

At the moment Stoick was pacing back and forth in his home anxiously waiting for news. He had already gone on several searches with Thornado trying to find some clue. It had taken Gobber and a few dragons to convince him that he needed to get some rest. If he kept pushing himself and Thornado there was a good chance that he would burn out before they found his son.

Toothless was no better. He was upstairs in Hiccup's bed messing with the sheets. Hiccup's scent was still faintly on them and it gave him a small amount of comfort. He growled and attacked the small table near the bed overturning the blueprints and art sketches. Toothless started slicing any of them that even had a tinge of the foreigner's smell.

The Night Fury was extremely frustrated. He wanted to go searching, but he couldn't without Hiccup. It would take Gobber to long to rebuild the same self control tail fin that Hiccup had given to him at Snoggletog. What was also bothering him was that he let his best friend be kidnapped. He should have anticipated that dragon's sneak attack, but he didn't. If he wanted to be honest with himself what was really bothering him and all the dragons on the island was that they sort of knew what dragon attacked, but they were having difficulties remembering facts about it. That blue fire had really done a number on them.

The door opened revealing Gobber who ducked to avoid being blasted by Toothless's fireball and a battle ax. "Whoa, not the kind of greeting one usually gives their best friend. You must still be wound tight. Haven't you had any sleep at all?"

"How can anyone expect me to sleep when my son has been missing for nearly a week! We've sent countless search parties out and asked our neighbors as kindly as possible if they've ever encountered a pink dragon with no results. Gobber, I don't even know if my son is dead or alive! I can't sleep until I know if he's safe."

"I understand that Stoick, but you have to get some sleep. It's tough with Hiccup missing, but you still have a village to take care of. Everyone understands that you're hurting, just as you were when Valhallarama died. People are sympathetic."

"I don't want their sympathy I want my son! Gobber, is this punishment from the Gods?"

"Why would you even think that?"

"I treated Hiccup poorly for most of his life. Val was always telling me to try and understand his uniqueness. She predicted that his creativity and good heart would cause big changes on Berk and she was right. I was just too blind to see it for so long. These past few months have brought us closer than ever before, but now... What if I never see him again? I don't know if I could survive losing my son forever."

Behind them Toothless let out a series of whimpers and rumbles indicating that he too felt the same way. He didn't know how he would survive without his best friend. Gobber had never seen two people who looked as apathetic as them. "Come on you two are coming with me. Its time we visit Gothi. Bring that thread Hiccup found. Maybe she can tell us something helpful."

Stoick and Gobber were joined by the riders inside Gothi's hut. She took the thread and looked at it carefully. She listened as the kids told her what they had seen in the woods. After listening to Toothless screech she started drawing lines.

"What's she saying Gobber?"

"She says that the dragons took Hiccup because he was, (what is that symbol oh), marked. She says that they needed him for something important."

"Marked? What does she mean by that? Hiccup doesn't even have a birthmark!"

Gothi continued to draw on the floor, her lines become more defined. She looked up at Toothless and crooked her finger at him asking for his help. The Night Fury gently placed his paw in the sand and worked with her until they both created a picture that looked sort of like a dragon and human next to each, but with a line divided through them.

"I don't get it. Is she saying that Hiccup was taken by other dragon riders?" Fishlegs questioned.

"No, she seems to think that whoever took him has a special connection to both humans and dragons. She says that if we want to find him we're going to have to ask, what is that? Oh, an old friend of Hiccup's for help."

"What old friend? Hiccup didn't have any until a few months ago!" Astrid pointed out.

"Not unless you count his imaginary girlfriend. What help is someone who's not real going to be?" Tuffnut muttered.

"This is getting us nowhere! Gothi, thank you for all your help, but I'm going to find my son on my own thank you very much." Stoick and the others left the shawoman's hut and started heading for the Great Hall. Night had fallen and everyone was feeling greatly depressed.

"We're never going to find Hiccup are we? It's just impossible without some divine intervention," Ruffnut whispered to Astrid. The thuggish female was trying to be supportive for her friend, but she

wasn't very good at this girly stuff.

"Hey, who knows maybe someone's on their way to help us now."

Just before they reached the Great Hall they saw the shadow of a dragon fly overheard. Peering up they gasped! It may have been dark, but they could still make out the pink scales. Before it could land someone fired a catapult. The projectile knocked the creature clear across town straight into Mildew's field.

"Come on! We need to capture it before it gets away!" Stoick yelled. Everyone was running to the old man's house were blasts of fire and angry shouts could be heard. Suddenly a single female scream could be heard. Jumping onto the dragons they flew the last few feet to Mildew's house.

When they arrived; the saw a cloaked figure struggling to break free of a heavy net while avoiding being harmed by Mildew. He was using his walking stick hitting the figure repeatedly causing the female to scream in distress. Fungus, the sheep was nipping at the intruder's feet. Bucket and Mulch, who had arrived on foot, pulled the old man off the trapped figure.

"Let me go you fools! Can't you see I'm trying to kill this abomination!"

"Mildew enough! I won't have you beating a helpless person to death, even if they're intruding," Stoick warned the old man. Gobber had already freed the female from the net and without any resistance tied her hands behind her back. When he reached to remove her cloak she struggled maneuvering about to avoid being revealed.

"You're a fool Stoick! That creature isn't human! She's probably responsible for the kidnapping of your fishbone of a son."

Stoick was ready to punch him when the figure spoke up. "Please, there isn't much time. If you want to know what happened to Hiccup and how to save him, then you need to listen to me. I'll go quietly to the Great Hall and tell your whole tribe the truth, but you need to trust me."

"Why should we trust you if you won't even let us unmask you?" Snotlout questioned. Around him all the other dragons were starting to get agitated and greatly distressed. They weren't making a move to attack the girl, but at same time they were giving her some space.

"Because Hiccup said you would trust me if I showed you something. Please just check my cloak pocket and take me to the Great Hall. All will be explained there," the girl pleaded. Suspicious Gobber reached into her pocket and took out a small piece of paper. He opened up and looked at it and his eyes grew big. Seeing this Stoick took it and also got bugged eye.

A few minutes later everyone on Berk, dragon and human alike, had assembled in the Great Hall waiting to hear what this intruder had to say. Stoick was standing in front of her and Toothless was growling threateningly. "You make one threatening mood and I promise you a world of pain understand?" he asked cutting her binds.

"Completely. There that's better. I suppose some introductions are in order, but first let me take off this traveling cloak. Its getting heavy," the girl replied. She reached up and removed the clasp on her cloak letting it flutter to the ground. In the light of the fire the people of Berk got their first glimpse of their mysterious intruder.

She was very beautiful with her exotic features. The most distinct was her long flowing dark pink hair and pinkish purple eyes. She had four distinct purple markings on her face going up and down her forehead and chin then across her cheeks. Her outfit was also a bit unusual. She wore dark red armored shoulder pads and long sleeved undershirt. Her short over shirt was pink with orange trim and a yellow furred belt with a small gold inlay. Her metal battle skirt was pink with orange nails. She also wore purple stockings that went just past her knees with yellow criss cross boots with pink gems. Her accessories included orange wrist guards with pink diamonds, a red and orange beaded necklace, and gold circulate with two small purple horns on it.

"Whoa, she's got to be the hottest girl I've ever seen!" Snotlout whispered only to be slapped by Astrid. She took note how the dragons were looking at her strangely; as if they were anticipating something to happen to the girl.

"My name is Nissa Draki and I'm a Draconiaâ€|" she started to explain before Stoick interrupted her.

"Nissa? _You're Nissa?!_ That's not possible; you're supposed to be Hiccup's imaginary friend!" His words shocked everyone including the riders. This was the friend that Hiccup had tried to tell them about? She didn't look imaginary.

Stoick gazed at the paper in his hand. It was a crude drawing of two people, five year old Hiccup holding hands with a girl who crudely resembled Nissa. He remembered the day Hiccup drew it. He had just come back from a trip trying to find the dragon's nest and Hiccup rushed up to show him. He had been mildly upset that he'd wasted time creating pretend friends instead of making real ones. Val had told him that it was good thing their son was so creative, it was a sign of his greatness to come. Looking at the hastily scrawled message under the picture which read, "Dad, please believe in Nissa this time," reminded him what was at stake.

"Believe me he never knew I was real, I was very careful to keep that fact from him. If he ever discovered the truth it would have caused problems later on when the time came for him to make his choice."

"What are you babbling about girl? You're not making any sense, at least not to us Vikings."

Nissa sighed frustrated with them. "This story will make no sense unless I start from the beginning. Please, just be quite and listen. Hold out your hand please and everyone focus on me," Nissa said as she took the nervous Stoick's hand. She closed her eyes and for a split second a pink glow enveloped their hands. Releasing his hand she cupped hers to her chest and took a deep breath. Suddenly the world around them dissolved and they found themselves floating in white mist.

"What in the name of Asgard is going on? What did you do to us?" Stoick demanded.

"_Please don't be afraid, this was the only way I could make you understand. As I tried to tell you I'm a member of the Draconia Daypeace tribe. We are hybrid draki class human dragons; who are direct descendants of one of the original twelve dragons,"_ Nissa informed the group. Her lips were moving, but they heard her voice in their heads not with their ears.

"Draki class? There's no such thing!" Fishlegs exclaimed,

"Human dragon? That's just nuts!" Tuffnut added.

"Shut up, I want to hear her story," Ruffnut informed her brother. Once everyone was silent, they noticed the mist had changed and now they were seeing images of past events unfold before they're very eyes.

_ "Thank you Ruffnut. Ages ago when the world was newly created the elements gave birth to twelve dragons. These dragons were the guardians of the world; criss-crossing the globe using their elemental powers to protect man and beast from harm. Of course there was the usual sibling rivalry, but when isn't there?" _

_ "Near the end of the long lives the twelve dragons split up in different pairs heading off in different directions to spread their essences across the globe in a special rebirth ritual. From this mixture of essences with different forms of life new species of dragons arose. The last two dragons to perform this ritual were to be the dragons of light and darkness. Of course these polar opposites had never gotten along well and with death and rebirth approaching they got into a huge fight nearly killing each other." _

_ "The dragon of darkness, who is the forefather to the Nighfurries, used his speed and rage to leave the dragon of light, my people's forefather, injured and bleeding on the sand beaches of my home Xanadu. He was very weak and didn't have the strength to complete the ritual. That was until he met our ancestress Tyra. _

The image of young shawoman dressed in a simple white healing chiffon with one shoulder strap. Her well toned complexion matched her short black hair and grey eyes. While the others of her island home raised spears and swords ready to slay the beast, she confidently walked over and started speaking gently to the injured beast. Not even when the Light Dragon snapped his teeth at her did she lose her calm composure.

"_There there; I understand_ _frightened and hurt. Looks like you've been in quite the battle. What's your name can you tell me?" Tyra whispered as she gently tended to the tears in the dragons membrane with a special paste. The Light Dragon growled a warning at her, but then started purring slightly as the paste took the pain away. "I think I'll call you Helios, after the Sun Charioteer. Don't you worry Helios; we're going to take good care of you. I'll show you the ways of peace and kindness." _

"Tyra must have been really brave to walk up to an injured dragon and tend to it. Most people wouldn't have done that. The only other

person who's done that isâ€œHiccup," Astrid whispered. She watched as Tyra and Helios spent time together bonding as they watched the stars and flew around with each other. Helios helped defend the people of Xanadu and helped them out with matters of the village. Months passed and finally it was their last sunset together.

_Tyra was saying goodbye to Helios in the language of the dragons, Dragonese. As he flew into the sky his sparkling scales absorbed the light of the sun before he dissolved into a shower of rays imbuing his essences with the people of Xanadu. _

That's when Nissa started narrating the story once more as images flashed at super speed all around them. _"From that day forth we became more than human, more than dragons, something exceptional that was the best of both worlds. We are born of flesh and blood; upon reaching puberty we start to manifest our inner dragon. By the time we reach our late teens we can fully manifest becoming our dragon selves at will and enjoy all the gifts that come with it." _

"Gifts? What kind of gifts are you talking about?" Gobber asked curiously. The world around them changed back to the Great Hall and Nissa started speaking with her mouth instead of her thoughts once more.

"My people in dragon form are extremely agile with great endurance. We have rainbow range of flames that cause different things to happen. You've seen some of them. We can also use our Dragon Heart abilities more effectively. What you just experience was me using my Dragon Heart to share memories with you. It works just the same as when linking dreams together or using psychometry to learn about some past events. There are one or two things that are part of being us, but there not important."

"I'm still having trouble believing that you can turn into a dragon. Yeah you have some freaky powers and look different, but really turning into a dragon? That's a joke right?" Snotlout challenged her.

"As my cousin's will attest to it's not a joke. We have always held the respect of our cousins because of our abilities, but they are nervous around us because of our humanity. I fear a demonstration is the only way to convince you. I would back up if I were you so I don't squash you," Nissa suggested as the riders backed up.

At first nothing happened, but slowly a pink glow outlined the girl. Her clothing startled to ripple and suddenly her body started growing and changing. She fell down on all fours as her body morphed into a medium size lean, but muscular body. Her limbs lengthened and strengthened as her fingers and toes melted into three clawed feet. Red bands appeared at her wrists and ankles as the reddish markings were seen on the underside of her sprouted tail, which ended with flat purple blade. Her markings transformed into purple nose ridges and ram style horns just below her rounded ears. A yellow crest sprouted on the crown of her head going down to her tail with orange spikes. Her wings sprouted from her shoulder blades; the spine pink, claw tips purple and membrane orange. Strangely enough her hair remained. In less then a minute she went from girl to dragon.

Three things happened at once. First the dragons started roaring loudly and trying to hold Toothless back from attacking the dragon.

Second Mildew grabbed a discarded sword rushing forward to intent on slaying the girl. Third Nissa turned and flew out of the way hovering just above the crowd. She opened her mouth and spat a blue flame all over Mildew. The old man teetered on his feet, before slumping to the ground asleep. She landed on the ground and returned to her human form.

"He's not dead, I misted him. As I explained different colored flames different powers. Our blue flame has the power to erase memories and put our foes to sleep. Red is traditional fire, yellow can take or enhance abilities, orange creates barriers, green shares knowledge and purple we use for sexual pleasure. Mildew here will sleep for a few days and wake up with no memories of what has occurred."

"Yes, that was an impressive display of power and talent, but I'm more interested in what any of this has to do with Hiccup. Why did your kind come here and kidnap him? Why does he trust you enough to ask for help? How do we rescue him? Well I'm waiting for answers!"

"Stoick, if you lose your temper now, we're not going to get any answers. Try counting to ten and then hitting something, that usually helps me," Gobber said.

Stoick looked at the girl who was nervously wringing her hands. She was clearly afraid to tell him the rest of her tale, but he needed answers. Taking a few deep breaths he asked her to continue her story.

"I understand your frustrations and anger. Believe me; my people aren't like this normally. We promote the ideals of peace, justice, friendship. We travel the world meeting other cultures learning from them and sharing our advances in science, arts, medicine ect. During our travels we keep an eye out for those who are like us to recruit them. Normally we avoid the northern lands because of the bad blood between Vikings and dragons, but fifteen years ago Queen Rayna ordered a thorough search to see if there was a soul who was different, one who used brains instead of brawns, a person who believed in peace and friendship."

"You used your Dragon Heart on Hiccup and then marked him didn't you?" Astrid whispered. "That's what Gothi meant isn't it?"

"Three small scratches on the left shoulder, disguised to look like a common injury. They may fade, but the bond is formed. Over the years the recruit and marker learn from one another until the recruit is ready to make a choice to join us or not."

"Yeah, but Hiccup's smart. How did he not notice his imaginary friend aged?" Ruffnut asked. "I mean you had to mark him when you were little and age with him right?"

"How old do you think I am?"

"Um sixteen, eighteen at the most?" Tuffnut responded.

"I'm a hundred and eighteen years old. The essence of the dragon slows down our aging process. Because we mature slowly we form strong bonds with one another. We mate for life. To survive the death of a mate is rare, and remarriage is impossible. This normally isn't a

problem, unless the royal bloodline is threatened," Nissa whispered. She shuddered at the memory of something. "I can't go into details right now; it's too painful. Just know a few months ago Queen Rayna, King Aksel and Prince Arkin and their escorts were attacked. It's too horrible to go into words what happened. Out of the entire party the Queen alone survived, barely clinging to life. It took all our healers strength to keep her alive. But the damage had been done. Without a direct heir and the only distant relation to the throne not showing the abilities of the rulers a replacement was needed. That's where Hiccup comes in."

"We don't understand. Don't you give people of choice before bringing them to your island?" Fishlegs questioned.

"Yes, but Hiccup was the only recruit who was compatible with Prince Arkin's blood. Normally we use the same ritual to transform recruits into us by sharing blood and essences from the community, but to alter someone so they can carry on the royal bloodline is different. It takes one lunar cycle for the person to become acclimate to the new blood replacing their old before emerging reborn from the egg. Once completed, he'll lose his humanity, becoming our new prince ahhhhhhh!" Nissa was shoved up against the wall by Toothless. The Nightfury roared angrily at her and she responded in the same language.

"Roar, hiss, growl, ahh! I'm sorry I didn't want to do this, but you of all dragons know how hard it is to disobey a Queen, especially if she's also human and can kill you with a single sword stroke! I'm extremely troth to my people, our ideals, yet I came back here risking everything, my home and people's future because Hiccup asked me to bring him home! You and Stoick can still stop it, we have to go back to Xanadu and challenge the Queen, prove you two care enough to break her newly formed bond with him."

"Toothless let her go! We need her if we're going to reach Xanadu. How far is your island from here?"

"It's hundreds of miles away in another sea. Even if you flew nonstop you'd never get there in time. If we're going to get there we need to travel first by boat through the ancient gateways. After that we can fly the rest of the way."

Stoick narrowed his eyes at the girl. He didn't get to be chief by being stupid. He knew there was a lot more to her story than she hadn't told yet. For example how she managed to return without raising the alarm to her people. For now though he let her open up when she felt more comfortable. He ordered a ship to be ready for departure tomorrow along with a raft for the dragons to rest on. He and the riders would be leaving on the rescue mission tomorrow. Until then Nissa would be staying with Gobber. Hopefully things would be looking up tomorrow.

Gobber looked at his guest as she made herself a bed near his forge. She moved with grace and precision not bumping into any of his tools or tripping over his strewn out weapons. She settled into Hiccup's corner rubbing her hands over his unfinished projects smiling faintly as if she was remembering a happier time. "Would it be wrong of me to assume that you've been here before? Should I be worried that you're going to steal something?"

"I understand that I have done nothing to earn your trust, but please have some respect for me. I have spent the last fifteen years periodically visiting this island and have done nothing to harm anyone," Nissa replied calmly. "I remember one time Hiccup came here to show me his latest project. He couldn't have been more than ten at the time, just starting his apprenticeship with you. He wanted to forge a new weapon I had told him about, the halberd, a poled ax with a sharp spear point on top of it. Several weapon masters on Xanadu had returned from a mission with a collection of new weapons for us."

"Thought you were peaceful people, that you didn't enjoy fighting much," Gobber said. He had cooked a simple meal and the two of them were enjoying each other's company before bed.

"We do seek peace, but that doesn't mean we don't know how to defend ourselves. Hiccup was so eager to make his own weapon to give his father that he melted the ax head and the point together. The hook on the back of the ax fell off and there was no way to use it block attacks. He was so upset it took me awhile to calm him down. I eventually convinced him to melt the metal down using it to make a new work hammer."

"Ah I recall that as well. He mentioned someone had given him the idea to recycle the old metal. How is it that no one spotted you during your visits here? Where you here all the time or did you leave?"

"Please, I know you have more questions, but they'll have to wait until later. I need my rest. Goodnight Gobber." Nissa settled onto her cot drifting off to sleep.

The next day was a bustle of activity at the docks as the ship was prepared for the journey. They were packing enough food, weapons, and change of clothes to last the journey. New sails were installed as the raft for the dragons was reinforced and a shelter hastily constructed over it to protect them from bad weather. Several maps were being compiled together to help them find the gateways. They were also bringing along a couple of texts to help them once they arrived at their destination.

"Make sure to pack enough supplies that we can rebuild this ship twice! I don't want us to get stuck midway on this journey and have to turn back because the ships wrecked! Spitelout, did you get the extra oars like I asked?" Stoick bellowed.

"Yes Stoick, and Sven, Mulch, and Bucket have finished reinforcing the entire ship. It should be able to withstand whatever rogue waves or dragons you encounter."

"It's not my cousins that you should be concerned about. The waters of Xanadu are filled with danger and not just from animals. There are pirate raids and groups of people who make Vikings seem like drunken fools instead of warriors," a voice said from behind them.

Stoick turned to look at Nissa, once again with her traveling cloak secured around her shoulder being escorted by a threatening Toothless and Gobber. Gobber handed the girl a mace which she tested for balance before taking a few swings crushing some nearby barrels.
"Thanks Gobber, the weight is just right."

"You're arming her? Isn't that a little dangerous?" Snotlout questioned as he and the other riders landed their dragons on the raft.

"Not to mention unnecessary, I mean the girl can blow stuff up by just turning into a dragon," Ruffnut pointed out.

"As you riders have learned sometimes it's not good to be a huge bulky dragon that can easily be shot down. My dragon abilities are greatly weakened in my human form so I'll need a weapon to defend myself. I'm not as great of a warrior like say Astrid, but I'm pretty handy with a mace. Is everything ready?"

"My men are just finishing stocking the ship with supplies. This would be a lot easier if you would tell us more about what to expect on this journey."

"You would never betray your island's secrets or its people to its enemies like Alvin the Treacherous. I made a promise to Hiccup to help bring him home, but if you're expecting me to disabosom my soul and all my people's secrets right now then you're mistaken."

"_You promised Hiccup you bring him back to us! So far all I've seen is you delaying us from rescuing him!" _ Toothless snarled at her.

"_I'm doing the best I can under the circumstances Nighfury! It isn't easy for me to follow my heart and do what is right, when I know I might be dooming my people to extinction! This journey is not just to ensure that we reach my home undetected, but for the humans and the other dragons to form a bond of trust!" _

"_Toothless ease up, it's going to be a long journey and if you two start brawling right now you're going to destroy the ship! We've got a least a week and half on the open seas and skies before we reach our destination so we got to learn to work together. Dragon breath knows I don't want to be stuck with Belch and Barf fighting the whole way on top of you two," _Stormfly informed the Nightfury.

"_Hey! We don't fight that often!" _

"_If we do it's to entertain our two riders! Its fun!" _

"_Can we all just calm down and get started on this journey please?" _

"_What's the matter Meatlug not up for fighting today?" _

"_Oh shut up Hookfang." _

"_All of you stop fighting! I won't have you upsetting Stoick more then he already is. Hear me young Daypeace, though it's been ages since we've encountered one of your kind don't think you can use your tricks to beat us. If you betray us or our humans then I promise to end you." _

"Great, not only am I being threatened by Vikings; I have to worry about being shredded by a dragon. My day just keeps getting better and better," Nissa moaned before realizing that she'd been the only

one to follow the dragon's conversation. "Sorry, having a conversation with my cousins. I'll translate next time and who knows, by the end of this journey you may all be speaking dragon."

"That would be the coolest! We could learn so much more about them and update the Book of Dragons while we're at it! Good thing I decided to bring it along with us! Can I interview you about your class of dragons? I want to know everything about you and you're people!" Fishleg's told her excitedly startling Nissa who nearly fell off the dock when he got to close.

"You can ask her questions later, right now we need to do a final check before we get this journey underway. Spitelout, I'm counting on you to keep the village safe in my absence."

"Don't worry so much brother; Berk will still be standing proudly when you get back here. You just make sure you come back home, I hate to end up trying to fill your boots permanently," Spitelout responded. After a few more goodbyes and final check they set sail with the dragons following them.

Nissa stood at the bow of the ship, the salty sea air ruffling her long pink tresses and the sunlight warming her skin. Her eyes took in the vast open sea and the sounds of dragon wings beating in the air. She could feel Toothless glaring at her backside, making her feel extremely vulnerable. She tightened the cloak around her. "I pray we make it in time."

"Nissa, are you okay?" Astrid asked coming over to the girl to check on her while the others worked to keep the ship sailing. The rescue party was small consisting of just the riders, Gobber and Stoick, plus the dragons. A smaller party would be able to sail in undetected, but making their rescue mission harder because of there small numbers.

"I'm not sure Astrid. I'm betraying my people by leading you guys to my home. I promised Hiccup I would bring him back to his friends and family, but at the same time I promised Queen Rayna that I would secure our future. I don't know what will happen when we get to my home and that's what I'm afraid of."

"I don't know how to answer that. I can't promise that everything will be okay or that your people won't die without an heir. I do know it means a lot to us that you're honoring your friendship with Hiccup and keeping your word to him. I have to admit I'm curious to get to know you as a person. Same with the rest of the riders; by the end of this quest I'm sure we'll all be friends."

"Thanks Astrid, I can see why Hiccup loves you so much. You're the perfect girlfriend."

"Nissa, I need your help over here! We need to plot our course!" Stoick yelled. Nissa shrugged her shoulders and went over to the keel of the ship where the guys were trying to figure out the map.

"Alright, we need you to tell us which way to sail to reach this gateway you mentioned. Is it far from here?"

"It's hard to judge distances on map or the open ocean when you fly. I got back here on my own power or hitching a ride with migrating dragons. Let's see, okay here's Berk, and the gateway is south by

south west from here. We need go this way."

"That's some rough waters with some troubling currents and would take us close to our enemies' lands," Gobber pointed out.

"Does that mean we can't blow stuff up? Alright this is going to be a fun quest!" Tuffnut said approvingly. His twin rolled her eyes and asked a question on everyone's mind. "How do we even work one of these gateways? Will it involve much reading or manual labor?"

"No reading, but it does require a little amount of effort to use. It's hard to describe how they work. Trust me when we get closer I'll try to explain better. It should take us two maybe three days to get to the gateway. Four days at the most if we encounter any major setbacks."

"So are you still connected with Hiccup through your Dragon Heart thing? Can you tell us if he's okay or in danger?" Snotlout asked curiously.

"The farther apart we are the harder it is to fully connect with someone. I can't see or hear what he's seeing, but I can sort of get a long distant echo of what's going on with him. He's not scared right now or being mistreated, but he's anxious to be rescued. The closer we get the more I'll be able to sense through the bond."

"Alert us if you feel anything changed," Stoick barked at her. He cleared his throat trying to get his thoughts in order. "Nissa, I want to thank you for your help. I know this can't be easy for you and whenever you summon up the courage to tell us more about the situation please don't hesitate."

"I won't. Let's just get to that gateway. Please hang on Hiccup."

Hundreds of miles away was a beautiful island with white sandy beaches and lush tropical forests. On the far side of the island were tall snow capped mountains feeding a flowing river. Nestled among the valley and hills of the island was a large and lovely village. On the ground were several humans going about the day as in the air Daypeaces flew doing chores, practicing their talents, and generally having fun.

A beautiful white marble castle with wide balconies, beautiful Corinthian columns, and large windows sparkled in the sunlight. The overall design resembled a grand temple or shrine with images carved into the marble and statues honoring their dragon forefather dotting the courtyard.

On the upper levels a grand balcony was attached to one of the pristine bedrooms. The room was large, full of natural light and very airy with beautiful hand carved furniture and beautiful artwork. A tiled bathroom and large closet was connected to the room. Sitting at the desk working on one of his latest drawings was Hiccup.

In the week since his kidnapping his skin had gotten a lot tanner from all the sunlight. His body was becoming slightly more toned because of his new diet, but the biggest change was because of the dragon blood they had been putting into him.

A knock on the door forced Hiccup to look up from his drawing. "Yes, what is it now? I thought I was going to be left alone today."

"Excuse the intrusion young Recruit Hiccup, but Queen Rayna requests your presences for lunch. I'm to escort you to her now," a guard said entering the room.

"Okay, I'm coming, just let me get my drawings. So what are we having? More fruits because I think I'm developing a craving for grapes," Hiccup told him. His footsteps were even and he didn't clank anymore. That was because he was no longer wearing his prosthetic. Thanks to the dragon blood, his leg was back.

3. Xanadu

Hiccup was not enjoying his stay in Xanadu as he was once again being marched towards the dinning room to have lunch with Queen Rayna Scandi, the leader of the people of Xanadu. Not once since his arrival had he been left alone save in Prince Arkin's former room. The Honor Guard was always nearby to ensure his safety and prevent his escape.

"Come on guys is it really necessary for you to escort me through out the palace? I think I know my way around now. Besides I thought recruits were allowed to explore and learn about the culture here."

"You're a very special and unique recruit young Hiccup. You carry our future in your changing blood. We must be careful to monitor you at all times to make sure that your body doesn't start rejecting Prince Arkin's blood," Guard Steinar reminded him. The guard was extremely well built with muscles, but more lean then a Viking and his short orange hair, turquoise eyes and bronzed skin made him stand out. Steinar and his female partner wore the ceremonial outfit of the Honor Guard. A form fitting orange tunic and pants with bronze trimming underneath a golden armor with a red belt and cape attached to the shoulders and criss cross boots with his helmet and gold arm guard.

Steinar knew the Recruit was trying to probe for more information about the palace and island to help him with an escape attempt. It was rare for a recruit to want to leave the island after being brought here, but then again these were unusual circumstances. This recruit was to become their new prince and heir to their throne. That is if everything went smoothly with the ritual and Healer Skerry could continue with the injections of Prince Arkin's blood without a fuss. Hiccup was making things extremely difficult.

"I understand really I do Steinar, but you can't keep me locked up here forever. Come on I've been here nearly a week and half. I'm getting sick of being indoors. I need fresh air and something to do other then lie around reading books or doing art. I need some action," Hiccup said forcefully. What he really needed was to explore the island to find the materials he needed to plan his escape.

"Perhaps if Healer Skerry and Queen Rayna deem you healthy enough, we

can escort you outside the palace grounds. Until then please try to be more respectful to our Queen at lunch today. She's still in a lot of pain and is trying her best to be a good host," his other Guard Ula reminded him gently. She brushed back her orange braid and knelt down so she was looking Hiccup in the eye. "I understand that you're frightened and you wish you were back home, but this isn't a prison. You have been given a precious gift, a chance to live a lifetime dedicated to peace and discovery. You wouldn't have to rely on others to get around and fly on your own without the help of that ugh Nightfury."

"Toothless is my friend! I understand that you all want me to like it here and that you're hoping I'll adjust, but keeping me in a gilded cage is not going to make me anymore cooperative than I was when I first woke up!"

"I would remember your manners young man. It's not polite to yell at people, especially the Honor Guards who are performing their duties," a female voice said. They had arrived in the dinning hall were a feast made up of local and Norwegian dishes were set out on the banquet table. Like other rooms in the palace this place was very large with beautiful mosaic floors with large colored windows. Sitting at the head of the table under a large painting of her family was Queen Rayna. "Hiccup, I'm glad that you joined me for lunch today."

"It wasn't like I had much of a choice."

"You always have a choices child; you just may not like them. Please sit down and enjoy the meal. We have much to discuss today about your continued stay here. I hope that you're adjusting to you accommodations. Perhaps after Healer Skerry does his daily exam you and I could spend some time in the library reading some new books. Perhaps you would like to join me in the art studio to work on your talent. Would you like that?"

"What I would like is if I had a bit more freedom. Maybe if you started trusting me a bit more, I'd be more incline to staying here instead of dragging my boots. If you want to earn my trust and respect it would help if you gave them to me. The only one who has is Nissa and she's not here right now is she?"

"Please don't mention her right now Hiccup and you're right, we need to trust you a bit more. We'll discuss the possibility of you being allowed out in the town proper later today. After being here so long its time you get some first hand experience with our way of life here on Xanadu. Who knows, you might even start manifesting your inner dragon. For now why don't you enjoy your food, it's delicious correct?"

As Hiccup was forced into his seat, memories of his arrival here on Xanadu started to surface. After he'd been captured the dragon had misted him and he'd been in an out of it for two days. All he could recall was voices whispering strange words such as; blood transfusion, ritual, and bonding. He also recalled several people arguing around him; one of the voices had sounded familiar and was pleading with another voice to send him back while the other voice was forceful and commanding. He couldn't make out what was being said, but he knew the familiar voice was in trouble. That's when he decided to wake up.

_Hiccup struggled to regain consciousness and when he finally did he shot up in bed. Sweat was pouring off his body and his head was pounding. He also felt sharp pains coming from his leg. He pulled back the covers and gasped at the sight of his restored leg wrapped in bandages. He was so scared he fell out of bed and that's when he realized that he had no idea where he was. _

_ "What the heck is going on? Where am I? How did I get my leg back? Why do I feel so weird, ugh I'm going to bleeeeeeeeeahhhhhhhh!"
—

_ "Take it easy, don't move. Here sip this it will help calm your stomach. You've been through a lot in the last two days and its finally catching up with you now that you're awake," a familiar voice said as someone helped him to the bed. He was shocked as he felt Nissa firm hands guiding him back to the large bed. "Welcome back to the land of the living Hiccup." _

_ "Nissa? What is going on this doesn't feel like a dream and you don't feel imaginary. This place certainly doesn't smell like something I made up. What's that sound? Hey why is it so warm oh my Gods where am I?" Hiccup demanded as he took a look out the balcony and saw pink dragons and the strangest town nestled among plants he'd never before. He was starting to panic, but then a calming sensation washed over him. He felt someone whispering in his mind to relax. He turned around and saw a nervous Nissa sitting on the bed looking anxious._

_ "I'm sorry; please forgive me; this isn't what I wanted to happen. I always thought that when the time came to offer you the chance to come to Xanadu and go through the Rebirth Ritual you'd come willingly. Then I saw how happy you were with that Nightfury and the progress you've made back on Berk. I realized it was selfish to take you away from that so I was planning on just taking this with me, but then Queen Rayna ordered you to be brought here and now everything a mess," Nissa rambled. She was clutching the missing page from his sketchbook tightly in her hands._

_ "Okay that's enough Nissa I need you to focus and tell me what's going on and where am I? How did I get here and how do I get back to Berk?" A knock at the door startled both teens. Nissa called out in a strange language getting a response that she wasn't too happy about. After arguing a few minutes she seemed to deflate and said something. The voice left and she appeared to be upset. _

_ "What's wrong? What did that voice want?" _

_ "That was the Honor Guard Ula reminding me that I have to get you ready to meet Queen Rayna for dinner. Hiccup, please you have to trust me. I promise that all your questions will be answered tonight and that I'll stay by your side through this whole ordeal. Just follow my lead and please try not to be sarcastic." _

_ Half and hour later the two of them were escorted to the dinning hall. Nissa had told him some general facts about what was happening like that he was a recruit and she was a Draconia Daypeace. She explained where Xanadu was and that he had his leg back thanks to his first infusion of Prince Arkin's blood. While all Draconia Daypeaces blood had healing properties; the royals were stronger able to wipe

out diseases, regrow limbs and other miracles. _

_ "In fact the royals abilities are ten times stronger then a regular Daypeace because they directly descend from our fore mother Tyra. The effects of their flames last a lot longer sometimes becoming permanent. They also are prodigies in the arts and sciences with unique talents that make them our leaders. You'll learn more about our history during your stay here," Nissa was telling him before she dropped down to one knee in submission. "Queen Rayna Scandi, I've brought Recruit Hiccup to you so you may continue the debriefing." _

_ "Rise child, I thank you for doing your job, even if it took a little prodding. Welcome Hiccup Horrendous Haddock. We've been looking forward to meeting you for a long time," Queen Rayna said in perfect Norwegian. She was a very beautiful woman with very charismatic and commanding presences. She was a bit shorter than his dad with a slim build, but toned body with fair skin. Her medium length wavy auburn hair had lavender highlights that matched her pinkish purple eyes. She was swaddled in a light pink tunic with bronze trim that ended just below her knees with a dark purple short sleeved top and a purple toga with pink draping over it. She had on gold bracelets, armband and crown along with a ruby necklace and brown sandals._

_ She glided into her seat underneath a portrait of her with two other people. One was a handsome man dressed in similar style of clothing only his were red instead of pink. He had long blond hair with orange highlights tied in a short ponytail with sparkling emerald eyes and light spattering of freckles. He had kind smile and was holding a telescope in his hands. On the other side of the queen was a young teen boy who was the perfect blend of his parents with his short auburn/lavender hair highlighted his high cheekbones and green eyes and slightly dark skin. He was holding some books in the picture. _

_ The Queen smiled and told her servants in another language something before turning to look up at Hiccup, as if sizing him up and determining his worth. "My family, the portrait was commissioned in honor of my son's hundred and twenty fifth birthday. My husband and I were so proud. I wanted to make a sculpture of him, but he said a painting would be more traditional. I was proud of him for being such a well mannered, helpful well rounded individual who went out of his way to make people happy." _

_ "Hundred and twenty five huh? Nissa mentioned you age slowly, how old are you and your husband if I may ask? Will I be meeting King Aksel and Prince Arkin later?" Hiccup asked. He noticed how sad Queen Rayna looked as he mentioned her family and everyone else in the room seem to be bowing their heads in silent prayer. "Did I say something wrong?" _

_ "Did Nissa not inform you of the current state of affairs on Xanadu and why we broke with procedure to bring you here so quickly? Weren't you curious why we injected Prince Arkin's blood into you?" Honor Guard Steinar asked, giving Nissa a rather unpleasant look. Hiccup could feel her face flushing with embarrassment and anger at his words._

_ "I thought it would be more prudent of our beloved Queen to explain

to Hiccup why she ordered his kidnapping." _

_ "Not kidnapping retrieval! Besides you can't tell me that that island of Berk is better than the paradise we have built here," Honor Guard Ula reprimand the teen. Both ladies looked like they wanted to argue some more, but the Queen snapped her fingers drawing everyone's attention. _

_ "Enough both of you. Nissa was correct that I should be the one to explain things, but her word choice was poor. To answer your question I'm two hundred and sixty years old, in the prime of my life. My husband was two hundred and seventy five when lost his life a few months ago along with my family and our escorts. We were returning from a diplomatic mission in a distant country on the continent of Africa when were attacked by a group of vile individuals who'd enslaved several mythical creatures for their own purpose. It was a blood bath and I alone survived though greatly damaged." _

_ "I'm sorry for your loss. I lost my mom when I was young too. It can be very hard to get past the grief, but what does thatâ€|" _

_ "With our royal line broken a replacement was needed. We'd hoped a relative of mine could take my son's place, but that individual failed to meet the necessary requirements; not to mention this person averageness doesn't bode well for our future. Thanks to some information Nissa provided about your biometrics we determined that you alone have the power to save our people. Nissa explained how recruits become one of us, but we've begun a special ritual by injecting you with the blood of my son so that you will in a sense be a reincarnation of sorts of him. You'll still be you of course, but with some of his traits and his power you will ensure our future." _

_ "Wait a minute I'm already the heir to the chief-hood of Berk and while I'd be happy to help you out, becoming your prince and adoptive son is not on my to do list. I'm sure that if you thought about it for a little while maybe you could come up with a solution. Maybe I couldâ€|" _

_ "We don't have anymore time to waste, the deaths of my family are destroying my grip on reality, and my own body is starting to shut down from the lack of strong familiar bond. If the rebirth ritual isn't complete by the end of this lunar cycle I will die and our people will go extinct. I'm sorry it has to be this way, but we can't allow you to leave," Queen Rayna informed him. Hiccup became aware of more Honor Guard members and could sense how upset Nissa was. This was bad._

_ By his fifth day on Xanadu he'd had enough of being in his gilded cage. On the one hand he was thrilled with a chance to study and learn about new dragon species and have access to so many books and new technology. He'd never admit he was actually enjoying submersing into a new culture, but at the same time he was miserable without Toothless. He was terribly homesick and no one, save Nissa, treated him normally. The others were already acting like he was a prince making sure that he remained healthy. As night fell he began to despair he'd never see his home again._

_ "Please don't be pessimistic Hiccup, all hope hasn't been lost," Nissa said. She had just landed on his balcony switching from dragon

to human form. "I know it seems bad now, but if you just gave it a chance I'm sure you'd like it here. Queen Rayna isâ€œ!"

_ "Nissa she's crazy and you know it! She's trying to force me to take the place of the family she lost. Most of the time I don't know if she sees me or just projects her memories of her son and husband on me! I can't go through this knowing I might just lead her to more heartbreak. I need to go home!"

_ "I know I can't stand seeing you so miserable here. Whether you believe me or not I never lied about anything during our time together. I've always been your friend so I have a plan. I'm going to inform the Queen that I'm returning to the waters of Berk for two reasons. One, make sure they haven't followed our trail and also to reclaim your stuff. She'll believe that and in the meantime I'll be bringing a rescue party," Nissa told him._

_ Hiccup argued about the dangers of that and asked why the Queen would let her go. So Nissa confessed a few important secrets to him and together they planned his escape. She would have to be extremely careful including leaving behind her communication mirror to prevent the Daypeaces from accidentally learning about the Viking rescue. After reaffirming their bond he told her to get going and hurry back. He'd do his best to convince the Queen to go with the second option or at the very least find out how to save the people of Xanadu._

After lunch he joined Queen Rayna in Healer Skerry's infirmary where he was busy preparing a fresh vial for another transfusion. This healer's office wasn't like anything Hiccup had seen before. There were shelves containing books on several diseases and cures from all over the world. Strange medical instruments were kept in locked drawers as diagrams of both human and dragon bodies were hung on the wall. There was a comfortable exam table and even a small lab in the back next to a natural freeze for mixing up medicines and keeping tissues in cold storage.

Hiccup was strapped to the table as a nurse used strange instruments to take vitals as she called in. She wrote the results in her little pad and then checked the strength of his leg. After being satisfied by the results she moved aside so Healer Skerry could do a proper exam. The man was ancient even by Daypeace standards. He had wispy white hair and his gold eyes were dim. He had several scars on his body that he joked were from his quests to learn different medical techniques from all over the world. He wore a simple blue robe that smelled as if it hadn't been washed in days.

"How are you doing today Hiccup? Is the leg feeling any stronger? Have you felt any dragon instincts yet? Maybe started manifesting new body parts?" the old man asked examining his struggling patient. "I wish you would calm down. We wouldn't have to strap you down if you weren't threatening to run out of the room every time I brought out a needle."

"Yeah well as advance in medicine you are I still don't trust your fancy instruments of torture. Give me Gothi's herbs and Gobber's prosthetics any day."

"Your blacksmith friend could learn a thing or two about creating realistic and functioning prosthetics from us. Now, back to my

question; have you started manifesting?"

"No, the only thing that's changed is that I'm hungrier more often and my skin's darkened. Well I do have to admit my senses seem to be getting sharper, but that could be the clean air," Hiccup admitted. He grimaced and tried to wiggle out of the way as Healer Skerry came at him with the needle. "Do you have to keep sticking me?"

"Healer Skerry, is it normal for it to take this long for a recruit to start the change? We only have four more vials of my son's blood and if he doesn't start manifesting soon does that mean the procedure has failed?"

"You need patience My Queen. While it's true your son blood is compatible with Hiccup, (I said stop squirming! Valma please hold him steady!), it varies from each individual how long it takes for our blood to start dominating. He's already improved health wise and as you can see he's starting to behavioral wise acting like us. With this new infusion I believe some time outside in tomorrow would be okay. Besides we can't keep him locked up forever; not if he's your heir to be." Healer Skerry explained as he started infusing the new blood. His patient stopped squirming and he seemed to be sleeping.

"I hope your right healer for everyone sake. Why don't you do an exam of me? Check to see how I'm doing and if a bond is starting to form. Helios help us if it doesn't," Queen Rayna muttered under her breath. So Skerry took a look at her and assured her that it was forming she just needed to give it more time. As she looked at the boy she couldn't help, but smile with pride. He'd make a great prince and wise ruler.

The rest of the day was a blur of activities for Hiccup that was aimed at acclimating him to his new world and trying to bring out his new dragon. Queen Rayna had taken off time from her duties to spend with him sharing her history and showing him the wonders of the world in the lounge. In the lounge were treasures from all over the world, such as wood from red gum trees, dyed wool from a llama, and even special ice with gases trapped in it from Antarctica. Hiccup didn't have to pretend to be impressed by these stories as he asked his questions. Little by little he was gaining their trust. Hopefully tomorrow's expedition into town would help him figure out how to escape or at least find a way to keep his promise to Nissa about saving her people.

The rescue party was approaching their third day on their voyage and would soon reach the Gateway that she had mentioned. It hadn't been easy with the rough currents and roaming dragons had taken a shot at them. Luckily all their dragons had worked together well to defend the boat. Nissa herself had even manifested and used her Dragon Heart powers to let the other dragons know they'd be out of their territory soon.

Nissa was starting to open up a bit more to both the Vikings and the dragons around her, although she was still very wary of Toothless and Stoick, knowing that they didn't completely trust her made it difficult for her to interact with them. She mostly communicated through Gobber and tried her best to get along with everyone. She was very inquisitive about how things worked on the ship and was always willing to pitch in even if she had no idea what to do.

After three days the riders had learned a few things about Nissa. She rose with the sun performing exercises she called tai chi to stretch her limbs before going on a morning flight with their dragons. When she wasn't busy helping out or practicing with her mace she was spotted writing stuff in a notebook or reading the Book of Dragons and other texts they had brought. But most curious was her habit of humming and signing songs in Dragonese with the other dragons.

Nissa was working with Stormfly and Astrid to repair some damage to the main sail. She was in human form, humming a tune as she held the beam in place while Astrid instructed Stormfly to nail it in place.
"What's that you're humming? I've heard you hum it before."

"Oh, sorry I didn't realize I was doing it. Bad habit really, I always seem to be humming or singing a song softly. Kinda embarrassing really; I'll stop if you want me to."

"No, it was beautiful. What's the song called? Can you sing it louder? I'm sure the others would like to hear it as well right guys?"

"It be better then listening to Hookfang moaning. I think my dragon's sea sick. Hey stop trying to throw me off your neck whoa!" Snotlout wailed as the others laughed at his expense. Nissa frowned and hissed something in Dragonese at the Monstrous Nightmare.

_ "You don't have to react to his words all the time. He was concerned about you." _

_ "She's right Hookfang, sometimes I don't know whose vainer you or your rider," _Stormfly chortled_._

_ "Well at least I'm not embarrassed for others to hear me sing. Three days with others and you won't even open your mouth unless Belch and Barf sing back up." _

_ "That's because we have perfect to part harmony right?" _

_ "Yeah, hey Nissa want to form three part harmony with us and sing your songs to the kids? I'm sure they'd appreciate your musical talents. It makes this boat ride more interesting." _

"I'll think about it Barf, but you might want to work on your high notes. They're still sounding a bit off. I did it again didn't I? You know I really should teach you how to speak Dragonese; it make my life a lot easier."

"Oh could you use your special green knowledge flames to teach us? I would love to be able to communicate with Meatlug and learn all her favorite things!"

"Yeah! We'd be real dragon riders' then right sis?"

"Who cares about learning right now I want to know more about what you were singing and why our dragon seemed to be joining in with you."

"Well that's because your Hideous Zippleback has a near perfect two part harmony. Dragons usually sing to win a mate or just because

they're happy. I was singing a song my mom taught me long ago. It's a simple little one that I use to sing with Hiccup when he was small and sad. Maybe he taught it to you?"

"I've never heard my cousin sing, scream yes, sign no. Teach us already!"

"Okay, don't be so impatient I'll teach you. _You are my sunshine, my only sunshine. You make me happy when skies are gray. You'll never know dear, how much I love you. Please don't take my sunshine away." —

"That was a sweet song, no I mean it. I wish I could sing like that, but I sound awful," Ruffnut told her. Nissa looked away unhappy with the praise. "Did I say something wrong again?"

"You don't have to flatter me. I know I'm not that great."

"Horse squat! We heard your lovely voice from the other end of the boat. How could you think that you don't have a gift for music? I trade my left hand attachments to be able to carry a tune like that. The only instrument I seem to have mastered is the panpipes. Can't sing and carry a tune at the same time," Gobber bellowed at the girl, who looked away. "What's the matter? You seem as unhappy as Hiccup did whenever his inventions never worked right."

"I'm not sure if you're being honest is all. I may be better at signing than a human, but for a Draconia Daypeace; especially one of my standing; I'm average. Average doesn't bode well. I have to be exceptional in the arts, athletics, scholarly pursuits, everything. My only strong points are my love of writing and reading, but even that's not good enough at times," Nissa admitted to the group. Clearly she had some self esteemed issues.

Before they could comfort her, Thornado and Stoick returned from the recon flight informing her they had finally found the location of the gateway she mentioned. Excited everyone started racing all over the ship as they steered into through the jagged rocks and around a whirlpool until they came to a small island with a strange stone arch formed out of limestone and quartz crystals on the far side. Strange carvings were etched in the stone and the area near the arch seemed to be filled with strange energy that was warping the plants.

"By Odin, I've never seen anything quite like this before. Does this pile of rocks and gems really have the power to transport a vessel anywhere in the world?" Stoick asked Nissa.

"The Gateways are ancient; no one knows for certain when they were created, but some say they have existed since the dawn of time. None of my people have unlocked all the secrets to these archways. While the limestone and quartz crystals indicate it uses ancient magic to power up, my King was a great scientist and he and the Prince use to spend time studying the Gateways. They believed that they made use of both magic and science to work."

"You see during different parts of the day depending on how much light passes through the focusing lens on top of the arch a different pathway opens up. King Aksel discovered that when light travels through space it travels in a straight line, but upon reaching Earth the force of gravity curves it and when it passes through a

translucent medium the light refracts or bends at different speeds. If you use that basic principle and measure the distance using the device Prince Arkin created, you begin to understand that while light dilutes time and space it's the magic stored in the gateway and the etchings that help link up the Gateways, so one can pick any desired location they want if they have the right mixture of magic and science."

"If we can create the right amount of light while increasing the amount of magic stored in the quartz crystals with your help I can link us up so we're near the next Gateway we need on our journey to my home. I'm not sure if the increased mass will cause problems during the travel, but my people haven't suffered any real dangerous side effects besides a little nausea when using the Gateways. So who wants to help me?"

Everyone just kind of stared at her like she was speaking gibberish and in way she was. Vikings were known as great fighters, masters of sailing, and making use of any curio they found during pillaging, but not so great when it came to science. Even Fishlegs the smartest member of the group couldn't understand what she was saying.

_ "These humans aren't the smartest members of the pack Nissa. It took them three hundred years to realize that we weren't trying to steal their food for ourselves," _Toothless pointed out to the Daypeace. The Nightfury walked over to her and continued his speech. While he still didn't trust his natural opposite much he needed her help to find Hiccup. "_Normally I wouldn't ask a favor from another dragon, especially you, but I think you need to use your flames on them."_

_ "What are you suggesting? I use my green flames in combination with my Dragon Heart so they understand the basics of what I'm saying? You know as well as I do that won't be enough to help them with where we're going. As much as I love learning about their personalities and lives from what I seen if the Twins and Snotlout don't change and Fishlegs doesn't get some courage we're all in danger. Even Stoick and Gobber could do with learning to be a bit more cultural if they want to deal with my people."_

_ "How long does your yellow attribute flames last? Even if it's only a couple days it will help the rescue party prepare for the challenge you speak of. If you ask their permission I'm sure they'll go with it. All they want is to be reunited with my rider's son. Go ahead Nissa," _Thornado bellowed at her.

"Alright; if you say so Thornado. It's becoming clear that this rescue mission might be in jeopardy if you guys can't understand what I'm saying or adapt to my culture. With your permission I'm going to use my flames to change that, but I have no idea how long the effects will last," Nissa warned them.

"If it helps us get to Xanadu quicker and find my son we'll do anything you ask of us," Stoick replied. The others nodded so Nissa linked them up with her Dragon Heart before breathing both green and yellow flames on the humans. Because she was linked to them she could direct the changes with more precision than if she just flamed them. After being satisfied with her results she turned off the link. "There's going to be a bit of confusion for a few minutes, but that should resolve itself. Now let's get working on that Gateway."

Astrid and Snotlout with their dragons flew up into the sky heating up the air causing light to pass through the gem at different angles helping to form the pathway they needed. The Twins and their dragon with Gobber's help were repositioning some of the quartz crystals to change the flow of magic. Fishlegs and Meatlug were following Nissa's directions on how to use the etchings operate the Gateway. Once done everyone gathered on the boat.

The sounds energy crackling and the wind howling could be heard as a brilliant multicolored vortex formed in the archway. The entire Gateway lit up as the focusing gem pulsated. Without hesitation they sailed through the vortex. As they traveled it felt as if they were being transformed into particles of light not and being constantly reassembled

Hundreds of miles away; about ten miles of the coast of Portugal, another Gateway light up. The ship was deposited into the open cold waters of the Atlantic Ocean. The bitter chill in the air combined with the change in the sun position in the sky was proof enough they had traveled hundreds of miles from their previous position. "Is everyone okay?"

"That was the craziest ride ever! It was way better then when we were being flung to our death off our dragons!" Tuffnut exclaimed.

"I can't believe that we just used magic and light to shorten our trip by days. Can anyone use these Gateways at any time? No, if they could we'd have more cross culture contamination. Whoa I just said something smart! I think your flames are working!" Snotlout said.

"Truly that was a terrifying but rewarding experience," Fishlegs said, but then he frowned. "Now our maps aren't any use and we have no idea of where we are. Also I think we lost some of our food during the trip. We need to restock."

"Nissa, do you know the way to the next Gateway? Good, boys' follow her lead and secure the next Gateway. Gobber help the girls restock our supplies. Nissa see if you can establish a stronger connection with Hiccup now that we're closer. Toothless help us. Thornado and I will tend to the ship. If anything changes let me know. We're coming son just hold on."

"Stoick, I've connected with Hiccup!" Nissa said excitedly. She had been kneeling on the hard deck concentrating on the bond she shared with Hiccup hoping for some news. With the distant shorter she could start to see and hear things more clearly. She could also taste the changes in his blood and knew time was running out. "We're still to faraway for me to get a clear picture, but he's excited about something. If I'm reading his emotions right they're finally letting him out of the palace. This could be just the break we're looking for! If they trust him outside the palace he might just come across the items he needs to escape."

—"For your sake I hope so! I want my rider and best friend back!"

—

The next day on Xanadu Hiccup woke up extremely excited. It had taken a lot of persuasion and the okay from Healer Skerry, but he was

finally being allowed to explore the island. He was very interested in learning more about Xanadu and not just because he was planning to escape. If this all worked out right he wanted to try and bring some of their advances back to Berk in order to help his tribe flourish.

Hiccup was just putting his extra sketchpad in his bag when he heard the sounds of two dragons landing on the balcony. He turned and recognized the Honor Guard members in their dragon form. Their eyes lit up as they connected with him using their Dragon Heart.

_ "You can ride on my back if you wish Recruit Hiccup. We have a lot to show you today and it would be quicker until you manifest your own wings," _Ula informed him, lowering her body so Hiccup could climb on her back. _ "Comfortable?" _

"Yeah, this is just like riding Toothless except without the saddle. So what are we going to see first?"

_ "That's a surprise. Hold on tight!" _Ula said as she flapped her wings and they took off into the air. Flying on Ula was different the flying with Toothless. He didn't have to control the tail fin and she maneuvered with more grace and style than the Nightfury did. They climbed high into the sky soon joined by the other six members of the Honor Guard: Davin, Isak, Rikard, (males) and Fia, Kariat, and Ylwa (females). Queen Rayna was taking no chances with Xanadu's only hope for the future.

Ula flew high into the air spinning like a top before coming to hover letting the warm sun bask her backside. Hiccup peered down and saw the island of Xanadu in all its glory. It was at least three times bigger than Berk. Before he had a chance to ask what she was doing the eight members of the Honor Guard dove towards the island in a steep dive. The wind rushed past him and he found himself digging his hands into her crest to stay firmly on her back.

Ula grinned before closing her wings tightly and then snapping them open as they twisted around zooming among the tropical forest at breakneck speeds scaring the local wildlife silly. The Daypeace twirled around as she came upon the river following its course downward zooming along the waterfall before flying through it into a tunnel cavern that let out on the far side of the island where groups of older Daypeace in both forms were lounging around in hot springs.

_ "The entire island is warmed by deep underground hot springs that can be found around the island. We've learned ways to tap into this power to heat our homes and we're experimenting with it and other natural resources to use to power our homes and new inventions," _Ula explained.

Davin flew next to her and started talking in Dragonese; attempting to teach Hiccup the language. He was getting better at understanding the strange tongue and only needed Ula to translate the more difficult parts.

_ "We take great pride in protecting our home. The forests are thick with animals we hunt for food, skins, ect. We make sure that the numbers don't dip too low and not to introduce anything that can upset the natural order. The mountains contain gems, rocks, and other

treasures we carefully mine for trade or building material."—

"It's amazing how well you take care of your island. Do you just hunt for food or do you cultivate crops for supplemental food?" Hiccup questioned as they flew back towards the city. They came upon fruit orchids, fields of crops and in the distance he could see several Daypeace deep sea diving for seafood. There were maybe one or two small farms containing livestock being carefully monitored.

They approached town and landed in large open courtyard near the market place. Scores of people of different ages were going about their business selling goods or meeting friends. Small children followed their mothers closely. What surprised Hiccup most was the great variety of clothing styles he saw. Most were dressed in clothing styles similar to the queen, but a few looked to be wearing Viking gear and others seemed to dress in outfits from different cultures. "What's with the diversity in clothing? Nissa told me she dressed like a Viking because she needed to look the part, but that's not necessary on Xanadu. For one thing the weather would make you extremely hot."

"Our unique natures mean we can regulate our body temperatures better than most creatures. Surely you've noticed that you haven't been sweating much even though you're still wearing your thick vest and tunic?" Ylwa pointed out. "It's true that many of us wear our traditional garb, but others enjoy immersing themselves into the cultures we encounter during our peace missions. You can learn a lot about other cultures by walking a mile in their shoes so to speak."

"What are those oh you use currency! On Berk we mostly use the barter system whenever Trader Johan comes by. If we need something from another island we trade or raid for it. It's a Viking thing," Hiccup explained to the Honor Guard. The sounds of the market place were loud and the smells were enticing. He came upon a stall selling colored glass sparking his interest. Glass was a rare commodity on Berk and he'd never seen colored glass like this before. He picked up a dazzling red piece feeling how smooth it was. "I've never seen anything like this before."

"We produce the glass ourselves using the different compounds from the mountain mixed in with the sands from our beaches. The forges are near the beach and we use our own fire to melt the glass and special techniques to blow the molten glass into different shapes. Glass is one of our major exports. We also use the forge to mold weapons, armor, and tools we trade or give away as gifts. If you like we can visit the forges later. I'm sure the smiths there would be happy to give you a lesson," Isak informed the young man.

Hiccup was excited about the possibility of learning new techniques for forging metal, but he needed to focus on the mission at hand. "Maybe later, right now I would like to see more of this town. Nissa told me about some of the places that I might be interested in. I would love to see the conservatory and check out the training areas. Maybe even see your science institute and arena. Nissa made this one game, Dragon Ball, sound like it was the best thing ever invented."

"I'm not surprised Nissa always enjoyed watching a Dragon Ball game with her parents. It's a favored game for the young because it helps

teach them how to manifest their inner dragon and shift effortlessly from one form to another," Fia replied. She was pleased the young lad was showing such an interest in Xanadu's favorite sport. It was a sign he was starting to leave his old life behind.

"The conservatory is not far from here. We can reach it by foot fairly quickly. Tell me does Berk have a formal educational place similar to our conservatory?" Kariat inquired which Hiccup shook his head in the negative. "A pity really. I suppose home schooling had its advantages as well, but learning with one's peers is joyful experience that I believe everyone should have."

"Well we don't really need a lot of education on Berk. I mean we spent most our lives just trying to protect our home before I made friends with Toothless. Thanks to me and my friends we created Berk's Dragon Academy to help teach us how to coexist with our new friends. We've really learned a lot about dragon habits. I wouldn't be surprised if Fishlegs tries to learn more about you guys to add to the Book of Dragons."

"He can try, but unless your friends learn to speak Dragonese like us, they're never going to truly understand what it means to be one with a dragon," Rikard mentioned casually.

The rest of the visit to town was beyond description. At the Xanadu Conservatory Hiccup watched children and adults of all ages learning how to read, do advance math, or develop their artistic talents. There were instructors for teaching music and dance. In the training grounds he observed teenagers partially manifesting dragon parts and taking their first flying lessons. Many of the teens asked if he wanted to join them or teach them some flying tricks, but he declined politely.

He didn't have to feign any interest when they went to the Science Institute wanting to know about everything they had ever discovered. He was fascinated by their knowledge of the stars, biology, their experimentation with light and other elements. When they went to arena he did participate in some of the games taking note of how much stronger and faster he was becoming. At one point he felt a burning sensation in his back and stumbled. When he asked the Honor Guard what it meant they said he was starting to feel his inner dragon, soon he might even start manifesting.

By the end of the day Hiccup was exhausted wanting nothing more than to plop into bed and sleep for two days. He hadn't heard anything from Nissa though he could feel through their bond she was getting closer to him everyday. He knew that she was doing her best to reach him before it was too late. As much as he wanted to see her again he knew she needed to conserve her strength for the challenge meaning she couldn't commune with him in her dreamlike form like before. As he reviewed his notes from the day he hoped he could figure out a way to save the Daypeaces without sacrificing his humanity.

Night had fallen upon the rescuers and they were still at least a day and half from the next Gateway. Frustrated that they won't be reaching it tonight, Stoick was silently fuming, while Gobber tried to lift everyone spirits with his panpipes. Sadly, nothing could lift Toothless spirits.

Nissa was writing in her diary when she felt someone tap her own the

shoulder. Looking up she was not surprised to see Snotlout in front of her. She had expected him or the Twins to approach her at some point.

"So I just notice that I'm still acting really smart and not preening as much as I did before. I've also observed that Fishlegs is actually looking forward to fighting your people. The Twins aren't hitting each other; they're actually helping out without being told what to do. Astrid is acting more girly. What kind of attributes did you enhance and when does it whereof?"

"Yeah, I mean I'm glad my hand is hurting from hitting Tuffnut upside the head, but its weird that I don't want to bicker with him," Ruffnut added coming over with the rest of the kids and Toothless.

"I told you before you would need to adapt to my culture if you wanted to help rescue Hiccup. Each of you is strong and brings different abilities to this mission. These same traits also make it hard for you to understand my people. You see us as unnatural creatures or weaklings because we seek peace, but that mindset could get us all killed. If I'm going to betray my people and risk our future I want you to be able to truly sympathize with what I'm going through," Nissa tried to explain, but they still weren't getting it so she decided to change tactics. Fingering her necklace she decided to come clean about one of her secrets.

"You once asked me Gobber, how I knew my way around your forge so well, you were right. I had been there and all over Berk many times before. Your village was almost too easy to slip in and out of with the constant raids it wasn't hard to come up from the backside of the island and trek unnoticed into the village. If anyone ever saw me all I had to do was mist them and they forget. After that it was just a matter of being careful not to reveal I was real to Hiccup."

"How long were you on my island undetected?"

"I would spend a few weeks then return home for a few months. On Xanadu I had access to magical items that could boost my bond with Hiccup so I could still appear in his dreams if he needed me. As the years past we became real friends saving each other from loneliness. Through his eyes I met all of you and realized that you could be real friends for him if you were willing to change a little. When I flamed you with my yellow fire I was hoping to bring out traits you normally hide so that you could change into better people. Traits that I hope Queen Rayna would respect and hopefully convince her to give back Hiccup without a fight. If we do have to fight, I'm not sure who would win and I would rather avoid more loss."

"You're speaking from personal experience. Who did you lose besides your King and Prince?" Gobber asked.

"The reason I was away was because I was dealing with the loss of my parents. I wasn't in my right mind to be handling Hiccup's recruitment," Nissa replied shortly. Toothless made some sympathetic whimpers encouraging her to speak about her pain, but she just shook her head. Maybe later she talk about them, but now wasn't the time. "I don't know how much longer my attribute change will last, but hopefully it will remain until we reach Xanadu. After the next Gateway there's only one more and then we'll be near enough to fly to

Xanadu. We have about two weeks before the rebirth ritual which is plenty of time if we don't run into anymore trouble."

"Then we'll make sure that there aren't any delays. Thank you for being honest with us Nissa. If you ever want to just talk you know that we're your friends' right?" Astrid asked her.

"I know that it's just besides Hiccup I've never really had any friends. I don't know how to make them or if anyone would be interested in being mine."

"Are you kidding? We'd love to learn more about you! We were all sharing stories about our childhood right before this mess. Why not share one with us?" Fishlegs encouraged her. The dragons joined in wanting to know more about her. Smiling she joined in the story time telling about her days of when she first started manifesting and exploring her home. In the night sky the moon was almost a first quarter halfway through its cycle. Time was not on their side.

4. Midway Point

_I apologize for the delay in updatons. The power cord to my laptop stopped working and it took awhile to order a new one and get it mailed here. I hope that you'll enjoy this next chapter after the long wait. _

It had taken a few more days, but the rescue team had finally sailed through the final Gateway. The second Gateway had deposited them near the Rock of Gibraltar, and after sailing another hundred miles the last Gateway had placed them right into the Mediterranean Sea only about two hundred miles from Xanadu. They would sail a bit more and then they would start flying on their dragons with Gobber bringing up the rear with the boat.

The rescue party was surprised by how clear the water was and how warm it actually was in this part of the world. The dragons were actually enjoying sunning themselves on the raft and Thornado was having fun swimming in the warm waters and catching exotic fish. Nissa had helped adjust her friends clothing so they weren't overheating in their armor and furred tunics.

"The weather seems to be cooperating with us and the ocean currents are helping bring us closer at a good speed. We should be in flying distant by early morning tomorrow. It will take another day or two by air to get there. We should begin planning exactly how we're going to rescue Hiccup," Nissa informed the group as she slid down from the masthead.

"I thought the rescue plan was simple. We land on the island, storm the palace, find Hiccup and hold off your people long enough for us to get back to the boat, and then get the Hel out of there," Snotlout replied.

"Can you see how many problems there are with that plan?" Astrid questioned him.

"Is there a place on the island we can land without being spotted? How are you going to keep our presence masked from your people considering you're linked through your Dragon Heart?" Tuffnut

asked.

"Besides won't they be able to smell us on you? You have heightened senses," Ruffnut added.

"They make valid points. If you told us more about the layout of the island and the palace we could plan a more effective rescue. I understand that you're still reluctant to go against your people, but we need your help if we're to save my son."

"I understand that Stoick, really I do. It's still hard to think about betraying me people in such a way that could lead to our extinction. You have to understand that our home is our one safe haven. Helios essence has kept the island from being accidentally discovered by other people. We have studied so many different cultures we'll use all our knowledge to prevent the destruction of our kind."

"_But you will assist us? After all you promised Hiccup you'd bring him home. You've already betrayed your people by bringing us to your island to remove the new heir. What harm can telling us about the layout of the island and how to sneak into the palace?" _Toothless asked her, his tail swishing back and forth in agitations. He was so close to his rider yet so far.

"Hey! I think I understood part of that! I know I caught the words; island and Hiccup!" Fishlegs shouted excitedly. "Does this mean we're finally learning to understand and speak Dragonese? Oh boy this is such a momentous occasion."

"Settle down Fishlegs, we still have to figure out our rescue plan," Astrid told him.

"Um you might want to start planning a rescue plan for us. There's a ship closing in on us and by the looks of things it doesn't appear too friendly," Gobber told the group as he peered through the looking glass at the horizon. They all looked across the water and saw a larger ship approaching their position. They couldn't discern any real details, but by the way they were speeding towards them they couldn't be friendly.

"I can't see the crew, but their sporting a black flag with a white and red design on it. I'm also counting at least six square catapults (ballistae) and I see two more weird designed ones with hooks. (Harpax). They've also got something caged on the top of the deck and their at least twice our size," Gobber informed the group. He noticed how Nissa stilled at the description of the boat. "What's wrong? Do you know who that is?"

Instead of answering them she barked orders at Barf and Belch ordering the Zippelback to sky. The twin heads took to the air climbing high. They started hissing back responses causing her to go pale and clutch her mace with a death grip.

"Nissa, Nissa, NISSA! Whoever they are we need to know what their strength and weaknesses are right now!" Stoick shook her out of her stupor. "Now are these the pirates and warriors you mentioned earlier?"

"Worse, much worse. They're poachers of exotic creatures. They're the

ones who tortured and ki watch out!" The teen shoved the chief to the deck as explosion of spears attacked the Vikings ship. Gobber, Tuffnut, and Snotlout readied their catapults launching a return fire, but their boulders missed their mark by a couple feet.

They could now see the ship and it was a Roman style lembos, a fast, maneuverable ship. Out of the sides they could see one set of oars steering the ship coming in to ram them with their metal platted battering ram. Seeing the incoming ship Thornado dove into the water, building up speed before ramming the ship, knocking it off course.

Even as they were being forced off course the enemy fired several large javelin missiles from their ballistae piercing their sails and tearing off part of the rudder. An explosion followed by the splintering of their bow was heard as the harpax drove a grappling hook straight through and started pulling them close to the lembos.

"We can't let them sink anymore hooks into us! Astrid, you and Fishlegs, take your dragons and start cutting the lines! Snotlout, you and the Twins take out their weapons while Gobber and I lay down some cover fire. Nissa get out there and see if you can take out their keel now!"

"On it chief! Come on Hookfang let's show them some real firepower!"

"_With pleasure! I've been itching to burn something to the ground for days!" _

"This is awesome! Our first sea battle!" Tuffnut told his twin.

"Just make sure that we don't die. BarfBelch, make sure you dodge those incoming flying darts. We don't want you to injure your wings."

"_We'll be careful don't worry about us!"_

"Wait! You don't understand how dangerous these people are!" Nissa shouted, but it was too late the riders had already taken off. "Call them back, they don't understand how much danger their in right now!"

"What are you talking about? We need to free our boat and sink them before they sink us!"

"They're the most dangerous poachers for a reason! They break and force exotic beasts to fight for them to avoid being killed for body parts or being sold to collectors! They'll kill the kids and capture the dragons for their menagerie!" Nissa responded as more grappling hooks splintered into the ship side. The force of the impact sent her sprawling across the deck and being partially buried under some barrels of food.

Toothless sprang into action using his great strength to shove the hooks right out of the side and blasting the foes with a fireball. More hooks were sent their way only to have the lines cut halfway by Astrid and Stormfly. Fishlegs instructed Meatlug to eat the incoming

missiles grinding them to dust before spitting out a large ball of fire that took out the battering ram. The other riders had gotten closer to the ship when Snotlout commanded his dragon to create a steam cloud to prevent the others from seeing the Twins approach. With the enemy temporarily blinded the Twins lit the deck on fire destroying the ballistae. A lucky shot by the adult Vikings powered up by Thornado took out the mast.

"Yeah we're winning! I don't know what Nissa was so afraid of; we're handling the situation well. Still something seems off a bit. Why are they still smiling?" Snotlout asked the other as they hovered over the ship.

"What's that creature in the cage oh man everybody move!" Fishlegs warned, but it was too late as several griffins tore their talons through the dragons' skin scattering the riders all over the sky. Down below in the water Thornado tried to get out of the water and back to Stoick, but was under attack by the normally gentle hippocampus. These tormented beats had scars across their bodies and their tails had long spikes through them tethering them to the boat, but still giving them enough leave to attack the Thunderdrome.

The poachers' road the Ophotaurus over to the Viking ship boarding it with ease. They wore a mix of armor stolen from both Greek and Roman fallen soldiers. They had hoplite styled helmets and shields, but their torso armor was the lorcia chainmail design. The poachers carried several different weapons. Some of them had spears, others had gladius style swords. At least two of them bows. They outnumbered Stoick and Gobber seven to two and Toothless was doing his best to survive against the Ophotaurus.

"What a surprise to find a group of savages sailing in these waters! Your ship and the dragons will fetch quite a sum on the black market!" the leader of the group informed Stoick. He thrust his sword forward with great speed and skill skewing the chief's right side, thankfully his armor protected him from it penetrating to deep. Not to be deterred the leader swept his spear to side dragging it halfway across the chief's enormous gut.

Stoick suppressed the urge to bellow in pain and grabbed the spear point in his meaty hands breaking it in two. He threw a punch denting the guy's shield. Pulling out his own sword, he darted forward thrusting his weapon about, taking on as many opponents as he could. He wrestled away a shield from a down opponent and head butted another off the side of the boat.

"Get off my ship you filthy pirates! I'm on an important mission and by Odin's beard I kill you all if you delay me any further!"

"Swearing by your absent deity won't stop us from claiming our prize. I think we can use your gluttonous bodies to feed our animals before we sell them! I'm sure they'll enjoy the taste of savage!" crowed another member as he shot an arrow at Gobber. Gobber deflected it with his hook and curled it around his foes weapons flicking them into the ocean. Using his free hand punched two guys in the face and kicked another with his false foot causing him to go down hard. He spit in their faces before picking up two members and tossing them into the ocean.

"If you think we're going to roll over and die you've got another thing coming!" Gobber informed them, but he knew the odds were against them. He could hear the shouts of the riders as they were trying to survive the air battle with the griffins. The waters were thick with blood and more poachers were attacking the different parties. They could be overrun any second.

A primal roar was heard followed by a flash of radiant sunlight. Several of the poachers fell off the ship as their skulls were bashed in by a flying mace. The weapon curved backwards into Nissa's hands. She jumped into the middle of the fray shoving her weapon into their chest, their knees, and heads. A clever sword strike sent her weapon to the other side of the ship. Not to be deterred she dropped into a Tai Chi stance she ducked under their swings, kicking their feet out from under them and then struck hard and fast with her hands.

She went after the leader knocking him away from Stoick shouting at him to deal with the rest. She twisted about spinning out of reach and brought her palm into his chest trying to knock him out, but that's when her Dragon Heart ability got the best of her. Images of a bloody battle and his vile emotions filled her mind. She stumbled backwards landing on the deck hard panting. The man stepped on her back pinning her to the floor. "Get off me! I'm going to kill you!"

"I think not my little draki. I remember you kind; such a fierce and deadly creatures. I lost so many men trying to capture your kind only to end up with nothing. I'm going to enjoy breaking your spirit. But first time to cut that hair of yours," the leader whispered pulling her hair up and getting ready to slice her locks off.

"_Leave my friend alone!" _ Toothless growled. He had managed to twist and shove the Ophotaurus off his chest. With a close range blast the creature was sent flying across the water and smashing through the enemy ship. He leapt on top of the leader unleashing his teeth biting deep into his shoulder. The leader screamed trying to throw the Night Fury off, but the dragon was enraged ready to slaughter all the poachers.

"_Thanks Toothless! I owe you one!" _Nissa called out as she jumped into the air. Her manifestation was quick as she soared high into the sky blasting orange barrier blasts trying to capture the griffins. "_Listen up! Griffins are fast and fierce, but they do have weakness you can exploit! If you can land a fire blast at the wing joint then they'll be unable to stay airborne. Also, they may have the eyesight and power of an eagle, but you can still bite their lion tails!"_

"_Got it! We'll take care of their wings!" _Belch and Barf shouted.

"_I've got the tail!" _Meatlug shouted.

"_We'll destroy that ship! Come on Stormfly let's go!"_

"_I'm with you Hookfang!" _

The riders twisted about and climbed high into the sky before striking at their opponents. Nissa darted in and blasted them with orange barriers keeping them contained. She dove towards the sea

creating a massive splash. Powering through the water she used her tail to side swipe the hippocampus and bit down on their fins. Taking a deep breath she blasted them with a purple flame so they started going at each other in a mating frenzy. With them distracted Thornado and her flew out of the water and with all the dragons and Vikings help sank the lembos leaving the crew to the mercy of the ocean as they sailed/flew off towards Xanadu.

Nissa collapsed onto the ship returning to her human form shaking in terror and puking the contents of her stomach. She was crying out in her native tongue with tears streaming down her face. Images of blood, guts, and screams of death were playing over and over in her mind. Ruffnut and Astrid tried to comfort her, but she was inconsolable.

"What's wrong with Nissa? She's never looked this upset before," Fishlegs said.

"It started when she touched those men with her hands. I gather those were the men who attacked her people slaughtering them. It must be torture to relive the last moments of your leaders lives over and over again," Gobber said.

"Is there anything we can do to help her?" Tuffnut asked.

"There's nothing we can do except be there for her as she relives the memories. In the meantime we need to tend to any injuries and make repairs on the ship. Hopefully this won't set us back too much," Stoick told the rescue party. He looked at the girl understanding her pain, but he needed to focus on the mission at hand. Hopefully she'd recover enough by nightfall to finish guiding them to Xanadu.

Nissa was lost in a sea of memories and guilt. She was reliving the worst days of her people's lives and it only multiplied her own guilt. Guilt of keeping secrets from her new friends, for compromising her people's home and possibly dooming them to slow extinction, but the worst was knowing she may have doomed her best friend to a fate not of his choosing.

"_I'm so lost. I don't know what to do anymore. I nearly got us killed because I froze. Maybe Toothless is right, I'm nothing but a danger to everyone. I've failed,_ " Nissa whispered to herself in her mindscape. She was curled up in a fetal position unable to move due to her shock. The memories around her were closing in making it harder for her to breath. She could feel her Dragon Heart starting to waver.

When all hope seemed lost a dazzling light appeared on the horizon. The warmth of the light banished the memories and her Dragon Heart regained its strength. Standing up she smiled as the mindscape was altered to Hiccup's house on Berk. Standing in front of her with a goofy grin was Hiccup.

"_I never thought I hear you call yourself a failure. I thought that was my job remember?" _

"_You were never a failure Hiccup; you just needed to find the right niche to shine. Its good to see you again, but knowing your hear contacting me is slightly disturbing. This signifies that you're becoming more Daypeace then human if you can contact me over a great

distant without the mirror." _

Hiccup put his hand behind his head with an unreadable expression on his face. He muttered something and then sat down on his bed motioning for her to join him. Once they were both sitting down he brushed a hand through his hair showing her the starts of lavender highlights in his brown hair. Looking at him directly; she could see other small changes and sense his inner dragon growing stronger.

"_Yeah, I've had a few more blood transfusions. There's only one left and then the rebirthing ceremony. I've felt my inner dragon nearly manifesting in the last two days or so. The bond between me and Queen Rayna has grown stronger. We're starting to sense each others emotions, feel the other ones presences. It's only a matter of time before she glimpses the truth in my mind about what you're doing," _Hiccup informed her. "_It's not a complete loss I mean our bond has gotten stronger right?" _

"_Is that a good thing? We've always been close friends, but your heart belongs to Astrid. I don't want us to be a couple if you complete the rebirth or are forced by Queen Rayna. It would be wrong. The Dragon Heart was meant to help our people draw strength from one another, a way to balance our two natures without being overwhelmed by either one." _

"_Yeah I learned that the hard way when the Honor Guard caught me trying to cut off my connection. My research in the library and talking with Rayna has confirmed our suspicions. While all your people were changed when Helios released his essences over Xanadu, the descendants of Tyra are directly linked to his soul so to speak; his powers, knowledge and extra abilities are contained in their blood. Its hard to put into words how strong this connection is." _

"_You don't have to, I've always known that the royals are a part of Xanadu and Xanadu is part of them. The royal family keeps our home safe from invaders, ensures the survival of our kind by keeping our natures in balance, and using our connection with the other dragons and creatures for aid in times of danger. It's not something that can be transferred like we hoped. Have you learned at all about how toâ€|" _

"_I can't figure it out unless the way to unlock the full potential of a royal is some kind of trauma or force of will. Has anything like that occurred?" _

"_If it has the abilities have not awakened and time is running out. The poachers that caused this mess in the first place have been dealt with, but I fear we might be delayed a day or two. If we can't reach you in time I suggest running into the caves in the mountain. The gems inside might be able to hide you from their Dragon Hearts until we arrive." _

"_I'll do that, but in the meantime I think you need to tell the others the truth. I know it's hard and they might not trust you, but if you don't your going to continue to suffer. At the very least tell them what happened to your parents. You need them as much as they need you. I'll be okay on my own for a few more days." _

"_Alright I'll tell them. You just stick to the plan and try to avoid manifesting as long as you can. We have only a few more days before the cycle is complete and there's no turning back. Be safe Hiccup._"

"_Be safe yourself Nissa._" _With those words the world around her vanished and Nissa fell into a deep and peaceful sleep for the time being. She hoped that Hiccup could survive a few more days until they arrived.

Meanwhile on Xanadu Queen Rayna was doing much better than she had been in the months since the death of her family. She was smiling and laughing dealing with matters of state again. She was even sculpting once more something she hadn't done in a long time. As she finished talking with the members of the Honor Guard about an upcoming peace mission she sensed the presence of the recruit, her soon to be adoptive son.

Brushing back a strand of hair she smiled as Hiccup entered the throne room. "Good afternoon Hiccup. How are you doing today? Healer Skerry informed me that you've recovered nicely from the last transfusion. Have you been eating enough to replenish your energies? I sense that you've been using your new Dragon Heart, is that correct?"

"Stop worrying so much Queen Rayna, I've been taking care of myself for a long time. I still question your medical methods, but can't deny how effective they are. I did overindulge a bit on a fruit platter, I can't help it. It's not like we have a lot of it back on Berk. Yeah, I was trying to use my Dragon Heart to communicate with Nissa. She's been gone so long I hope something hasn't happened to her."

Frowning a bit, Queen Rayna narrowed her eyes before replying. "It is strange that it's taking her so long to return from the Northern Lands, but then again Vikings are extremely stubborn. I wouldn't be surprised if she was leading them on merry little dragon chase. I just hope that she manages to return before the ceremony is complete. It's always good to have the original bonder to be here during the rebirth incase we need to sever it."

"Whyâ€|whyâ€|why would you do something like that? Look, I understand that you two have some issues that need to be work out, but Nissa is my friend and I know how much it would hurt her to lose the bond she shares with me if you did that! You're both suffering from your losses and instead of being there for each other all you can do is hurt one another. It doesn't make sense consider that your reâ€|."

"Just because we have a connection with one another doesn't mean we get along well. I appreciate how loyal you are to her, but as future prince it might not be best for you to continue associating with Nissa considering who she is to me."

"You're starting to sound like my father before he changed."

"I'm nothing like the man who hurt you emotionally for fifteen years. What you consider a lifetime is a blink of the eye to me filled with inexcusable behavior. I see I'm not going to change your mind about this today. I'm tired of fighting. Would you like to go on an outing

with me? I was thinking of visiting the hot springs. You haven't lived until you've had a hot spring bath."

Being nude in public among members of the other gender? Sure why not I haven't been humiliated enough." Hiccup remarked sarcastically. He then gave her a small smirk and let her sense he wasn't as upset as he made it out to be.

Queen Rayna flew them both to the royals' private hot spring in a narrow valley near the mountain. The sweet scent of fruits filled the air and the gentle breeze carried the sounds of songbirds. The pools were a little hotter than he was used to, but once he sat down in his swimming trunks and relaxed he felt his worries melt away. "This is amazing. I've never felt like this before. Ah I wish Berk had one of these, I'm sure they would make bath night easier for Snotlout."

"The hot springs are one of my favorite things about Xanadu. I enjoy exploring the forests and flying high into the mountains. The beaches are the perfect place for families to picnic and have fun. I have protected this island for years as its queen and I refuse to let it or its people vanish. I apologize again for forcing this fate upon you, but you know what will happen if you don't accept the change."

"I don't want your people to die either. Your culture is so beautiful, but you have other options than using me to do this. Why not ask for help from your cousins or see if you can activate the latent powers inside!"

"We've tried that in the past. Our cousins; it's difficult to explain our problem to them. They are so fearful of our human nature and they tried helping us in their own way. They brought magic treasures, potions, and so many other things to our island to help us out, but in the end none of it can keep our dual nature and our island in balance. Your northern dragons were suffering enough under the unnatural queen they couldn't help us. Not that we would ever accept help from a pack who listens to a Night Fury."

"Why are you so prejudiced against Toothless? He's my best friend and has helped me become stronger than I ever thought possible. He would do anything for me and I would do anything for him."

"I'm sure that your friend Toothless is a loyal and proud dragon, but you have to understand that the rages of the Night Furies have often ended up with our kind suffering injuries and fatalities. Night Furies draw their strength from the night and we the daylight. We've tried to make peace with them, but every time ends in disaster. The last time we met a pack of Night Furies was when we first investigated the possibility that there might be a peaceful Viking we had a clash. There were injuries and fatalities on both sides. I'm not sure how much it impacted the population of Night Furies, but we haven't seen any except your dragon in a long time."

"That would explain why Toothless has always been alone. I sure hope there are more of them out there. It would suck if his kind was suffering near extinction. Maybe your two species have more in common than you think."

"It's an interesting hypothesis and I would love to investigate it at

another time. Right now, I think we should be heading back to the palace. Its getting dark and I would feel better if we were safe behind the walls. The forests are not that safe at night. You shouldn't go out into the wilds without escorts at night," Queen Rayna warned him as they flew back to the palace. Hiccup wondered if she had read his thoughts about escaping, but knew he had no choice. He had to escape tonight to avoid the final steps of the rebirth process.

Night had fallen and the Vikings had finished the repairs to the ship. They were coasting through the waters. At first light all of them save Gobber would fly to Xanadu and land on its far side. From there Nissa would sneak them through the forests and into the palace where they find Hiccup and escape. If they were caught Stoick was ready to issue a challenge for his boy. Nothing would prevent him from retrieving his boy and taking him home.

The crew was enjoying a dinner of smoked meat and the last of the veggies they managed to save. The dragons were chowing down on some fresh caught fish. Toothless had just finished his dinner when he looked up and saw Nissa just picking at her food. Ever since she woke up she had been restless and apathetic not really joining in the conversation going on. Swallowing his pride he picked up a fish and loped over to her.

Nissa didn't realize the Night Fury was in front of her until Toothless dropped the fish at her feet. Surprised she looked up at her kind's opposite with arched eyebrows.

"_This is for you. Without your help we would have all died today. I'm tired of fighting with you. I want to make peace."_-

"_Coming from you that's a pretty big deal. I thought you didn't trust me at all."_-

"_You care a lot about Hiccup that's obvious. I was jealous of your friendship with him. He and I are best buddies, but I can tell from the way you talk about him that you and he are best friends. You'll do anything to keep your promise to him."_-

"_That's true I would. I still hope that with his help I can find a way to help save my people. I can't just let us die out. You know he said I should be more open with you and the others. Tell them about my parents that it would help me heal."_-

"_I'm sure the others would love to hear about your parents considering they're halfway following this conversation. You're a good tutor in how to speak Dragonese."_-

Nissa stopped speaking and finally noticed the others were staring at her. While they hadn't understood everything they had been able to decipher part of it. Sighing she put her plate down and cleared her throat. "I guess you were wondering what we were talking about."

"A little, I'm more surprised that Toothless offered you a fish. I thought you two hated one another," Ruffnut said.

"We've come to an understanding. Look, I think its time I was a little more honest with you about my past."

"You don't have to share anything if it's too painful to talk about," Tuffnut told her, but she waved him off.

"It's okay I need to talk about this considering what I had to relive earlier today. Those poachers were the same ones who attacked the royal family and their escorts a few months back. Witnessing the slaughter of my people and knowing those savages felt nothing except satisfaction and greed is sickening. They took great pleasure in killing us. I'm happy that you sunk them and left them for the beasts to devour."

"Think nothing of it. You helped us so much so we're happy to return the favor," Fishlegs told her.

"So what do you want to tell us? How it feels to be a dragon, secrets about your kind, what? We're all ears," Snotlout added.

"When I was in that nightmare I thought I never wake up. It was so much sadness and death, and then a light appeared and washed away the darkness. It was Hiccup."

"Hiccup contacted you? Is he okay? How's he doing, does he know that we're coming? Has he come up with an escape plan?"

"Stoick take a breath and let the girl speak."

"Hiccup is in good health and he's fine, but it's not a good sign that he contacted me via the Dragon Heart. It means his human blood is fading. We might not have as much time as we hoped. He told me he'd try to escape soon, but in the meantime I was supposed to share about my parents. He thought it would help me heal and earn your trust. So I guess I will."

She reached inside her cloak pocket and removed a miniature painting she had been carrying. They passed it around taking a look at the couple. The female had heart shaped face with long braided lavender hair, sparkling gold eyes and slightly large nose dressed in a tunic style dress with strange picture writing on it and gold armbands. She had a strange hooked sword on her back (kopesh). Holding her in his strong arms was a man with cropped pink hair and purplish pink eyes. He was very broad and was wearing a similar style outfit only with light weight metal armor covering him. Tucked in the crook of his arm was a pouch with some tools sticking out of it.

"There names were Ola and Ragnar and they were 195 and 205 when they died. They were very loving and kind parents who always encouraged me. My dad taught me how to fly when my inner dragon first manifested and my mother taught me Tai Chi. They were always there for me when I needed them."

"What did your parents do for a living? Did they bond with people like you in search of recruits? Did they go on peace missions?" Astrid asked politely.

"My mother was weapons mistress. She was so talented truly gifted easily mastering any weapon she trained in. She was quite the cunning fighter, but training others in how to defend themselves wasn't her true passion. In battle she was fierce and determined, but outside of it she was very funny, gentle, kind. What she really enjoyed doing was being a sky dancer."

"Sky dancer? What's was sky dancer?"

"You guys want to show them what sky dancing is?" Nissa asked the dragons. They nodded and took to the sky. Meatlug partnered with Thornado and Hookfang with Stormfly with BelchBarf in the middle. They climbed high into the sky and started twisting and twirling around each other. They clutched each others claws diving to the ground and splitting up. They did loops and graceful aerial tricks shooting fireballs at one another and dodging them before they landed gracefully back on the raft. "That's sky dancing; an expressive form of artistic talent and joy. My mom was one of the best, she could actually control her manifestation in such a way she would be half human half dragon during her performances. It was magical to watch."

"I'm sure it was a dazzling sight to behold. What of your father? What did he do?" Gobber asked.

"He was a blacksmith and architect. He loved building and creating homes, structures and such for people. He could use any kind of raw material to build. When he went on peace missions he enjoyed fixing damaged homes and creating schools for children to learn in. He was always dependable and brave no matter what the situation was. They both were really proud of me. I was so sad when they were killed a few months ago while on a mission of mercy. I promised myself I would live up to their ideals and ensure peace wherever I went. That's why I want to help you guys out."

"We're honored that you confided in us. I give you my promise as Chief of Berk that once we've rescue Hiccup I'll try to help your people find another way to survive."

"Thank you; all of you I really appreciate all you've done for me. Let's hope that Hiccup manages to retain his humanity for two more days," Nissa replied looking out across the waters. She said silent prayer for Hiccup hoping he would escape his fate.

On Xanadu Hiccup was running through the forests desperate to get to the mountains. He had managed to climb down from his room and escape on foot before the Honor Guard realized he had made a break for it. He could sense them in the sky searching for him tracing his Dragon Heart.

"Got to keep the dragon under control. Can't risk manifesting or they'll find me ahhhhhhh!" he screamed as he tumbled down an embankment in the dark. Ignoring the scraps and cuts he got back up racing for the caves. Overhead shadows of dragons could be seen.

He had nearly made it when an orange blast of fire blocked his path. He took off in the other direction only for it to be blocked as well. Soon he was caged in. Withdrawing his dagger he pointed it the assembled guard glaring at them. "Stay back! I'm not going back to the palace!"

"This is foolish young recruit. You're rebirth process is nearly complete. To run at this stage risks your death," Steinar told the boy taking a step forward.

"I don't care Steinar. I'm sorry you lost your heir and I feel bad

for Queen Rayna, but I'm not going to abandon my family and humanity to take the place. We all know that someone else should be the heir if you give her the chance to prove herself!" Hiccup growled not realizing his eyes were glowing.

"We don't have the time to wait any longer. Queen Rayna has finally recovered from her loss. If you leave now the bond you formed with her would be shattered. She'd die and soon our people would too!" Ula shouted at him.

"The lunar cycle will be at its end soon Hiccup. There is no turning back. Your former family is to far away to help you now. Return and embrace the gift you've been granted," Fia pointed out. Flanking her were Kariat and Ylwa moving in on the right. On the left Davin, Isak, and Rikard tightened the circle. There was no escape for the young Viking.

Adrenaline was pumping through his veins along with fear. Hiccup's heart was pounding as he looked for a way out. He couldn't keep the inner dragon down any longer as in panic he breathed fire from his mouth scattering the Honor Guard. He was so shocked he stumbled backwards as scales started appearing on his body. As he furiously tried to brush them off he tripped and hit his head on a nearby tree passing out.

Ula quickly scooped up the boy. "It appears his inner dragon is finally coming to the surface. We need to return him to the palace and lock him up in Healer Skerry's infirmary until the Queen finishes the preparations for his rebirthing egg."

"Let's hope she can finish it sooner then expected. If we don't finish the ritual soon he might successfully escape next time," Steinar said. The others nodded and flew back under the near full moon sky with the unconscious boy. Time was running out for all parties involved.

5. Rescue Mission Astray

_My laptop is in the shop and so I'm using another computer to type this. However this computer doesn't come with a word program that spell checks so if there are mistakes I miss please understand. Also, I made a mistake in ages last chapter for Nissa's parents. Ola should have been 244, not 195 and Ragnar 254 not 205, because otherwise they wouldn't have gone through puberty yet to have Nissa.

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* * *

><p>The sun had risen a few hours ago and the riders had taken to the sky as soon as they could see properly. While Gobber brought up the rear with the ship the dragons followed Nissa's leads riding the thermals and gliding along the air currents. It was going to be a long flight to Xanadu and only Nissa and Hookfang's endurance levels were strong enough to keep flying for long periods without resting.</p>

Nissa was forced to fly slower not only because she had to guide them, but because Toothless refused to stay on the boat a second longer. Instead Stormfly, Hookfang, and Nissa had to take turns

carrying the Nightfury in their claws or on their backs. Gobber promised to work on creating the self controlled tail fin, but it would be a challenge to construct one on the open sea while steering the ship. For now; they would just have to lug the dragon with them.

"So, exactly how long until we reach landfall? If its going to be awhile I think we need to do something to keep our minds occupied other then staring at the ocean right?" Tuffnut called out.

"Maybe we should practice our Dragonese. Once we get to the island it might come in handy to understand what the other Daypeaces' are saying," Ruffnut replied.

"It's a good idea as any. Nissa, how much further is Xanadu from here?" Stoick shouted over the roar of the sea to Nissa. The pink dragon's ear twitched indicating she heard him. She responded with roar, but the words were lost. She tried again with her Dragon Heart; this time the Viking Chief saw the island and the vision pulled back greatly indicating they were still a ways off. "Alright, let's pick up the pace a little. I want to reach Xanadu by nightfall at least! Come on Thornado show me that power of yours."

_ "As you wish! I'll fly until my wings fall off if I have to! How are the rest of you holding up? This is the longest we've had to fly in a long time. Plus, we have to carry Toothless, can't Gobber ride him?"

-

_ "The mismatched human needs to steer the ship. If we're going to return home to Berk, we need to have the ship ready to sail us back," _ Meatlug replied. _ "Besides, he has no experience flying other than the time he rode the Boneknapper. Can you imagine him trying to control Toothless? Its laughable!" _

_ "Do we even have a plan on how were going to win against a whole island of Daypeaces? We're going to their home turf and trying to steal back their last hope for survival. They aren't going to just roll over. They'll fight to the death to keep Hiccup with them," _ Belch pointed out.

_ "Then I guess it's a good thing we love to cause chaos! We'll blow up as much stuff as we need to cover our tracks. Good thing to I want to have some fun. It's nice that our riders aren't so violent anymore, but I do miss causing destruction," _ Barf added.

"_Please, it's that kind of thinking that nearly got us killed during the raids. We need to act smart and be stealthy. I want to make it home with both of my wings intact!" _Stormfly interrupted hotly. While she enjoyed a good battle she also didn't want to end up with a permanent injury like Toothless preventing her from flying on her own.

_ "Don't worry so much Stormfly we'll be in and out of Xanadu so fast those Daypeaces won't know what hit them! I for one can't wait to test my skills against our cousins. Its time that someone showed them what being pure dragon is all about," _Hookfang replied. He was the one carrying Toothless in his talons. The Nightfury appeared to be resisting the urge to use his retractable teeth on the Monstrous Nightmares legs upon hearing him boasting. He knew that if they were to prevent the rebirth ritual, they needed to think with their heads

and not use their brawn, to make it off the island alive. Toothless understood that if they didn't stop the ritual then his friend would be lost to him forever. The bonds with the other Daypeace would ensure that his friend wouldn't leave Xanadu, much less interact with a Nightfury.

"_Hang on a little longer my friend. You've always had the strength of a Viking buried deep inside. Now is the time to use it! Nissa, have you been able to connect with Hiccup at all?"_

_ "No, he's still not answering my call. I can sense through the bond that he's still human, but its like something is blocking our connection. I'm worried that he might be injured or trapped unable to call for help. I pray to my ancestors that he managed to escape into the mountains because if he didn't then this rescue mission is going to incredibly difficult to pull off. Come on you northern cousins pick up the pace! The thermals aren't going to last forever!" _

* * *

><p>The dragon pack continued to fly for two more hours taking only a minimum break. As the afternoon sun started baking their skin they made their final approach through a misty ring of water. The Viking eyes seemed to slide away and their senses dulled. The dragons started feeling weird as well, as their natural instincts told them to be cautious. Nissa, reenergize by the afternoon sun, let out a joyous roar and her entire body lit up in a brilliant flash of pink light. The mist seemed to melt away and in place they saw a beautiful lush tropical island.</p>

"Whoa, it's the most beautiful sight I've ever seen. Look at all those trees, that mountain range, the beaches! So different than Berk," Fishlegs commented. It was Dragon Researcher's dream paradise to explore a whole new land and learn everything he could about Daypeaces.

"The city is so amazing. Even from a distance I can tell that is bigger than the village. The buildings are so unique looking!" Astrid exclaimed.

"Shouldn't we be trying to avoid the city? More importantly its inhabitants for now? If we get any closer we're going to be spotted," Snotlout told the group.

"He's right, Nissa can you use your Dragon Heart abilities to shield us from your people for now?" Stoick asked. He received a nod from the dragon girl. She did a reverse swoop going back through the mists to retrieve Gobber guiding the ship through the barrier. She reverted to her human form for a few minutes talking with the blacksmith while the pack hovered. After conferring with Gobber she manifested once more and started guiding the riders to the far side of the island away from the city.

The pack landed on the far side on a narrow stretch of beach. In front of them loomed a thick forest of trees and in the distant the mountains. They could all smell the minerals being warmed in some nearby hot springs, although they couldn't see them. The sounds of wildlife entered their ears as Nissa returned to her human form.

"Alright everyone listen carefully. The forests of Xanadu are teeming with animal life, most of which you haven't seen before. As long as

we're respectful and don't stray from the path we should be fine. This part of the forest isn't frequented by hunting parties, but that doesn't mean we shouldn't be cautious. If Hiccup did escape from the palace; the Honor Guard will be searching the island for him. We're going to have to move stealthily through the undergrowth until we reach the base of the mountain. Once there we can climb up the mountain and search the caverns for him. If he isn't in the agreed upon spot then we'll have to go with Plan B."

"What's plan B again? Is that where we wait until the cover of darkness to slip into the city and storm the palace?" Ruffnut asked. Nissa nodded. "Okay, just wanted to be sure."

"Can't we just ride our dragons to the mountains? It would be faster and easier than marching through the forest," Tuffnut said, but Nissa shook her head. The danger of the northern dragons being spotted was too great. They would have to go on foot. After making sure the boat was secure and hidden; the group entered the forest hoping they would find Hiccup once they reached the mountain. Nissa took a deep breath, decathtect any worries of loss, and started marching into the forest.

The trees were thick and the air felt heavy with moisture. Everyone was on edge as they made it through the forest. As they walked along the path Nissa pointed out the different plants warning them about what was dangerous. The dragons were snatching up critters filling their stomachs. After a half hour of hiking they managed to reach the mountain edge. The sheer walls would make it difficult to climb, but there were some narrow ledges they could use. "Alright, the best way to do this is for everyone to take it one step at a time. Make sure that you don't dislodge any keystones or we'll have the whole mountain on top of us. The entrance to the caverns is only about fifty feet up and to the left. The dragons should go first to lead the way and anchor us with these ropes that way if we slip they can pull us out of danger. Okay let's go."

It was a hard climb, the dragons having to dig their talons deep into the rock. Several small boulders tumbled down towards the rescue party. Stoick and Gobber managed to deflect most of the boulders and the kids helmets protected their skulls. Each step was more tortures then the last. Finally they made it to the caves and started searching the tunnel system for their lost friend.

"Hiccup, Hiccup are you here? Answer us!" the kids called out. The dragons searched the nooks and crannies, but there was no evidence that anyone had been in the caverns recently. Toothless took a big sniff of the air and confirmed Nissa's worst fears. The young Viking had failed to make it to the caves.

"He's not here and if his escape attempt failed, then Queen Rayna would have moved up the ritual. If she did then she's busy preparing the rebirth egg as we speak and then placing him inside. If we don't rescue him before midnight tonight then his humanity will be lost forever," Nissa informed the group.

"That's not going to happen. We'll get Hiccup back and then you can help us figure a way to remove the Daypeace blood from his body right?" Astrid questioned. Nissa gave her a slight shrug not sure if it was possible for her to remove the blood of Prince Arkin without someone like Healer Skerry. The group left the caverns and started

the long hike towards the city. As they marched the tired Vikings began to whine about how much walking they had to do.

"Do we have to keep walking? My feet are starting to swell up," Fishlegs complained.

"Would you rather us be taken prisoner?" Tuffnut asked him seriously. "As much fun as a jailbreak would be, I don't think Hiccup's got the time on his hands for us to waste time rescuing him." His commented surprised his twin who arched her eyebrows, but said nothing in response.

"Not to mention Hookfang and the other dragons needs some more time to recover. Flying that long without rest really did a number on them. You okay buddy?" Snotlout asked.

"_I'm fine, I'll be getting my second wind soon enough. Just watch me burn my way through trouble._"

_ "The objective is not to be spotted you Nightmarish fool! Ugh, sometimes I wonder why I bonded with a human at all," _Thornado whispered to himself. His squatish frame and small legs meant he had the toughest time with walking through the forests, but he kept reminding himself it would be worth it in the end.

* * *

><p>A few minutes later the group stumbled upon the Royal Hot Springs. The group was so tired and sweaty that a bath in the springs was starting to sound like a good idea. Nissa was about to suggest they take a short break when she stilled and her whole body was tense. She peered in the distance and then swore in her native tongue. "The Honor Guard is coming! Quick all of you need to hide! There's a thicket with a small hidden alcove just on the other side of the treeline. The humans should hide there, cousins you need to disappear fast! Hurry they'll be here any second!"</p>

"You heard the girl everyone take cover now!" Gobber barked. The riders quickly darted into the treeline and the nearby alcove. The dragons darted behind rocks or dove into the hot springs. Nissa thanked her luck the winds were blowing the scent of her friends away as she quickly schooled her expression. As the two Daypeaces' landed they reverted to the Honor Guard members Fia and Isak. "Greetings Honor Guard. It's good to see you again. How have you been?"

"Skip the pleasantries Nissa. Why did you come here instead of reporting back to palace to let us know you've returned from your mission. If Queen Rayna hadn't sensed you here we'd never known you returned. Are you hiding something?" Fia demanded the youth. Her steely eyes looked over the girl then the surrounding environment to asses if there was any trouble in the area.

Her partner also listened for sounds of intruders, but heard nothing unusual. Still he reached out with his Dragon Heart as he addressed the girl. "You were gone much longer than anticipated. Does it really take nearly three and half weeks to retrieve a few items and lead Vikings astray. I understand that even using the Gateways it would take sometime to return, but still you haven't been goofing off have you? Is that why you came here?" Isak questioned the girl.

Nissa's eyes narrowed and she clutched her hands in anger. "Do you all have such a low opinion on me because of what happened months ago? It wasn't my fault and I've tried my best to help our people. Sneaking on to Berk when it's on high alert for rogue dragons is not as easy as you think. I had those warriors chasing me all over the northern seas. Our cousins are very persistant when they want to be. That Nightfury somehow got a new tail fin that helped him fly on his own. It took all my skills to lead him in the wrong direction. It took a lot out of me and I needed to regain my strength before coming home is all." She projected her anger as loud as possible to hid her lie from them.

"Apologies for doubting your skills. We know it wasn't your fault what happened with those poachers. Your lucky to have survived such a brutal attack and managing to keep the Queen from succumbing to death. Still, why have you come here instead of reporting in?" Fia asked.

"I needed a chance to relax and revitalize myself is all. The hot springs minerals, especially the ones here, are the best medicine on the island. Speaking of medicine, how are the transfusions with Recruit Hiccup going? I was so happy to feel his inner dragon manifesting through our bond, but now he's silent. He's not dead is he?"

"Of course not Princess Nissa, your friend tried to escape two nights ago. I guess he is a Viking in some ways with the way he slipped past our defenses. He even stood up to us and tried to fight us off by himself!" Isak informed her. "The Queen thought it best to keep him locked up in the infirmary until the rebirth ritual tonight. As we speak Healer Skerry is giving him the last transfusion and getting him ready to be placed in the rebirth egg."

"Has the Queen been able to establish a bond with him? I noticed when I was returning that the island's defenses were stable and the people seem to be happy again. If she's nearly recovered it would mean we're not in danger any longer."

"The bond is there, but it needs more time to deepen. I fear the Queen could revert to her depressive crazed state if the ritual was to fail. It would help if your there to finish cementing the bond with the new prince. I'm sure that it can still be arranged for you and him to become mates. You should report back to her once you've finished your bath Princess. We'll let her know you've returned. Be quick and see you tonight at the ritual."

* * *

><p>The Honor Guard manifested their dragon forms and took off towards the palace. Nissa was elated that they hadn't discovered her friends, but two seconds late was pinned to the ground with a raging Nightfury teeth near her neck ready to kill her. She saw the angry and confused expressions of her Viking friends looking as if she betrayed them, and in a way she had.</p>

_ "To think I was starting to trust you, but you never had any intention of helping us rescue Hiccup. You just wanted to delay us until it was too late! Your nothing, but a liar and a traitor!"

_Toothless hissed at her going in for the kill when Stormfly wrestled him off her. The Twins pinned her arms behind her and Stoick was

giving her a death glare. "I believe its time you come clean to us about all your secrets. Are you really the Princess of this island? Did you intend to take us prisoners to prevent us from saving my son? Did you do this to become his mate? If you're next in line for the throne why did you kidnap Hiccup? Well why weren't you honest with us from the start? I want answers!"

"Yes, I'm the Princess of Xanadu, but only through blood relations. Queen Rayna is my mom's older sister. Even though my mom abdicated from the line of succession, she retained her title as Princess, and passed it me. I was never in line for the throne until the death of my cousin and uncle. I didn't tell you because I didn't think you would trust me."

"We don't, how can we be sure of whose allegiance you serve? You said you were betraying your people by bringing us here, but now we know you have more at stake with Hiccup's conversion then before. What should we believe?" Ruffnut asked her.

"Everyone, I know we're angry and hurt, but we've come to far to turn on each other now. Nissa has stood by our side helping us grow and fighting alongside us. We've seen how much she cares about Hiccup's well being and I for one thing we need to give her a chance to explain the truth to us," Astrid told the group. The dragons echoed her sentiments pleading with them to not kill the girl. Finally Stoick told the Twins to release her and waited for Nissa to explain the truth to them.

Taking a deep calming breath she let it all out as she struggled to find the words to say. "Where do I start? My childhood I guess. I grew up in the palace right alongside my cousin and his family. Though my cousin and uncle would spend time with me, my aunt remained aloof and distant from me. She was extremely close to my mom despite the age difference and she adored my father, but me she just didn't know what to do with. After all I wasn't being groomed to be a possible successor to the line not even as an extra. I was different the other Daypeaces, different than other direct descendants of Helios and Tyra. For one I was a late bloomer when it came to manifesting my inner dragon. Most of us start manifesting as early as our eighties, sometimes earlier. Arken started manifesting at seventy five and had complete control by the time he hit his hundredth birthday. Me, it took until I was ninety-four to even start showing my inner dragon. You can't imagine how humiliating it was at school to be left out of dragon classes because you can't manifest your wings. The constant teasing and rumors that I was flawed because of my averageness was hurtful. That was another reason my aunt avoided me. She couldn't understand how someone who was a blood relation to Tyra couldn't be exceptional at so many talents."

"Oh I don't know your story is awfully familiar to us. Reminds us of someone we all know and love," Gobber told her and the others nodded in agreement. In many ways Nissa's life story was mirroring Hiccup's.

"So how did you end up being the person who marked and bonded with Hiccup?" Fishlegs asked encouragingly. The others were honestly interested in how this weird bond between the two came to be.

"Well, my family was very patient and my cousin helped me a lot with getting my inner dragon to manifest. I enjoyed the time Arkin and I

spent practicing in our dragon bodies and having fun together. He loved listening to my stories and hearing me sing. My parents were also very doting and never once said they thought I was weak for not being exceptional. My uncle loved to bounce his scientific theories off my head because I was so into the different cultures we helped. He thought I grow up to be a cultural anthropologist/writer. It was him who suggested to my aunt I would be a good candidate for finding recruits and bonding with them. She was highly skeptical considering how I had barely mastered the change, but on my mother's pleading she gave me a chance sending me out with a few other recruiters to search the northern lands for a possible recruit."

"I wanted so badly to prove myself worthy in my aunt's eyes and indirectly my people's as well. I strayed from the pack staying in the lands longer than they did refusing to give up. I was cold and tired by the time I reached Berk almost ready to give up. That's when I felt something warm and joyful touch my heart. It reminded me of the love and kindness my parents wrapped me up in when we flew around Xanadu or swam in the hot springs. I followed the tugging until I came upon a house on a hill. It was late and the village showed signs of being attacked earlier. We had heard of course of our northern cousins troubles with the Red Death, but were unable to do anything about it. I peeked through the window and that's when I saw your family for the first time," Nissa told Stoick looking him directly in the eyes.

As she spoke he could visualize what she had seen. Him talking to Val, complaining about the latest raid as she tried to rock Hiccup to sleep. Her gentle and comforting hand telling him not to worry so much. Them talking about their son and how small he was compared to others and worried about the future. Them going to bed and the girl slipping through the windows and gazing into the eyes of the inquisitive child. Hiccup laughing and waving his arms for her as she cemented a bond between the two before slipping away into the night to return home to Xanadu. Her coming back every few months or using her magic mirror to talk and play with his son. He could see her comforting him when Hiccup's mom died or being there for him when his inventions failed. He could picture his son easing Nissa's loneliness and showing her the affection she had wished for. He could understand why she was so determined at first to bring him back to Xanadu and why she would have changed her mind after seeing him finally accepted among his people.

"What happened that day your people were attacked by those poachers? How did that lead to Hiccup's kidnapping?"

* * *

><p>"The royal family and the Honor Guard were on their first official world tour to meet up with the descendants of the other elemental dragons. My cousin was leading the peace missions and renewing our friendships with other dragon species. It was to be Arken's first real chance to show what kind of a leader he'd be one day. He was the perfect diplomat, warrior, and scholar during the first part of the trip. He saved a forest from being destroyed by careless humans. He brought justice to a town overridden by evil and he was able to negotiate trade agreements with our water cousins. He was so brilliant. My parents had been on a separate mission of mercy at the time, but caught up with them when they were crossing the African skies. I had also just finished spending some time with

Hiccup and took the Gateways to meet up with them. I loved sharing my stories with them. Arkin especially loved hearing about Hiccup and couldn't wait to meet him. Everyone was happy and was eager to return home. That's when it all fell apart."<p>

The group found themselves once more linked up in her Dragon Heart mindscape as memories of that fateful day started playing before their eyes. All the members of the dragon pack were flying without a care in the world. They had just entered into the warm seas of home and were talking about how they couldn't return to Xanadu. Nissa was showing off a new flying trick she had learned from observing a Monstrous Nightmare earning cheers from her family.

_ "I wish we could help our northern cousins, they've been under the spell of that horrible queen for so long. At the rate of the raids increase soon Berk might not exist anymore. Are you sure we can't send some of our people there and do something about it?" _

_ "Nissa, you know how dangerous it is for our kind in the northern lands. The Vikings would slay us on sight and the chances of encountering a Nightfury are very high. If we were to go Dragon Island to free our cousins we might end up under the Red Death spell or worse. I know how attached you are to those people. The Vikings, while crude in many ways, are brilliant when it comes to sheer ingenuity and guts. I promise that as soon as we can think of a plan to help out; we'll go free our cousins from their fate," _ King Aksel told his niece. _He flew closer to her stroking her for a few seconds with his tail fin letting her know he cared._

_ Prince Arkin dove under his cousin and skimmed right up in front of her causing her to tumble a bit. Laughing she chased him through the air in a game of tag while the adults watched in merriment. The members of the Honor Guard were shouting at young royals to get back in formation so they could be better protected. Queen Rayna shook her head in disbelief as she watched her son get tagged by her niece and the two wrestling in the air for a few seconds before returning to their pack._

_ "Honestly there is no reason to be so childish. Arkin, you are getting to old to play games with your cousin. You are the hope and future for all Draconia Daypeaces. You need to show decorum and be ready to act at any moment with dignity. Honestly Nissa, you need to grow up as well. You're not a child anymore," _Queen Rayna lectured the youngsters. She ignored their hurt looks as her sister flew beside her.

_ "Rayna, their just having a bit of fun. I seem to recall us blowing off steam after a long peace mission. You need to lighten up," _Ola told her sister.

_ "Besides it just us now, who cares if we goof off? It's not like anyone, but other dragons could understand what were doing and saying right now. When we get home I'm going to make plans to build a fun house for you," _Ragner joked earning a chortles from the Honor Guard. Queen Rayna silenced them with a look. Behind her the two cousins started to talk in whispers.

_ "I wish your mother wouldn't be so hard on me. I'm trying really to be more prestige and noble, but it's never enough. Why she yell at me when you're the one who started the game?" _

_ "Just ignore my mom Nissa, she's always snappish after a tour. Hey, when we get back to palace want to head to the training grounds and show me those new moves you learned from watching the Vikings fight. I love to see if I could dodge your mace this time." _

_ Before Nissa could comment the entire body was under siege as air missiles shooting at them. The pack scattered as hooks tore through their membranes. The Honor Guard quickly formed a protective barrier to keep the royals safe, but it was torn down as the skies were filled with hippogriffs and monstrous birds whose talons broke through the barrier._

_ Several men with weapons were cruelly riding on the backs of the abused creatures. Nissa roared in pain as arrows fired through from a crossbow tore a crossed her scales. As blood fell into the sea below she let loose a blast of yellow fire trying to decrease the archer's skills, but she missed. Something struck her in the back tearing at her crest her spines breaking under the pressure. "That's it, catch that dragon! She'll fetch a fortune to the right collector ah!" _

_ The poacher fell off his ride as Arkin blasted him with a blue flame, barrel rolled under the hippogriff racking his talons and then tossing off the giant bird from his cousin's back. He performed a corkscrew maneuver scattering the rest of the birds including one cockatrice, a few daramulum, and at least two tortured Qingnaio. "Are you alright?" _

_ "I'm hurt, but I think I can still fly!" _

_ "Good, it seems all these creatures are being forced into trying to capture us! The Honor Guard and our parents are doing their best to take out these vile poachers, but they're heavily armed and these poor beasts look like they're going to fight us until they die to avoid more pain," Arkin told his cousin. _

_ Above them and in the distant the Daypeaces did their best to survive. Several members of the Honor Guard were using their flexibility and endurance to maneuver through the skies taking out the flying creatures. Her parents were on the ship taking hits and delivering more as they tried to sink the ship. The Queen was using her unique powers to call for help as the King used the powers of the sun to blind the poacher so he could take out their weapons. Blood, scales, and body fluids were raining from the sky and it looked like the battle could go either way. "We need to end this fight and soon! Even with our endurance we can't keep this up much longer." _

_ "Agreed, I'm going to help my parents out and take out the boat. You see if you can help our fellow creatures out!" Nissa told him. She flew around and dove under several fighting members skimming the sea lining up a shot to take out the boat only for the tentacles of a chained leviathon to shoot out of the water and wrap around her tightly. She let out a strangled cry as she was dragged underwater. She fought with all her might trying to get free, but she was almost out air and her body went limp. _

_ The beast screeched in pain as someone bit off all its tentacles and punctured its eyes. Nissa had reverted back to her human self as she was dropped on a small outcropping of rocks. As she struggled to

regain her breath her blurry vision made out her cousin. "Arkin, what's...going on? Have we....won.... the fight yet?" _

_ "The battle's taking a turn for the worst cousin. I'm going to go help my parents. My mom is trying to contact our water cousins to get them to come to our aid. You need to rest here, don't worry I'll be back for you." _

_ "Wait! I can still fight! Let me catch my breath and..." _

_ "No, I couldn't live with myself if something happened to you. You need to stay safe! Remember what I always say? I'd gladly sacrifice everything including my life to spend time with someone I love or to keep them safe. Rest I'll be back in a few minutes." Before Nissa could protest he was gone and she passed out. _

_ The rest of the massacre came from the stolen memories of the poachers. She watched as her parents were overwhelmed, pushed to the brink of death and the Honor Guard members had their skulls crushed, in the claws of the enemy. How the King and Prince sacrificed themselves taking missiles to the heart. How Queen Rayna transmuted the light into a giant ball of raw power shoving away the poachers boat far away, killing a few humans and creatures. How a few water dragons showed up and took all the members back to Xanadu. _

* * *

><p>The mindscape vanished and tears were freely falling from everyone's eyes. "My parents managed to hold out for two more days before they died of infection and internal injuries. Half the Honor Guard lost their lives in the battle and the others slipped into a coma before dying of organ failure. My cousin and uncle were killed instantly. I was released after a few days of recovery, but my aunt, she lost her mind. I tried to help her, but she rejected my bond. I tried everything to help her, but it did no good. In the end it was Healer Skerry's medical knowledge that saved her life. Almost at once they tried to awaken my dormant royal powers, but none of the skills came to me. I couldn't feel the pulse of life from Xanadu, I couldn't maintain the balance with the entire island's natures or call our cousins. My effects weren't permanent. I was passed over after a month of trying. They couldn't risk our Queen's health any longer so that's when we looked to our recruits and well you know the rest."</p>

None of them quite knew what to say now that the truth was in the open. They had never thought of the consequences of slaying entire packs of dragons and now they could see how it changed an entire culture. Nissa had lost everything in the bloody massacre and despite her efforts to grow into her new role no one had really given her a chance. In so many ways she and Hiccup were alike, but instead of his happy ending she was going to end up exiled and hated by her people for trying to help her friend.

Stoick was the first to approach the girl and help her stand. She looked at him slightly confused until she saw his eyes. He understood truly understood what she had been through and what she was risking by doing this. "I understand now why you didn't tell us the whole truth at the beginning and I'm truly sorry for how much you suffered. When we were killing dragons we never stopped to think about our how our actions effected them long term. If Hiccup hadn't shown us a

better way we still be fighting and I would have lost him ages ago. I thank you for helping my son feel more confident about himself, enough that he embraced his destiny."

"You're welcome and I want to thank all of you as well. I've never really had any friends before. I know that no matter what happens I want you to know your friendship means the world to me."

"You're a pretty good friend as well. Tuffnut and I weren't so sure about your idea to change our personality at first, but I have to admit it's kinda fun not having to be so crude. I like being nicer actually," Ruffnut admitted and Tuffnut added, "Yeah and not getting hit upside the head all the time is a bonus."

"I like being smart and strong. It makes me more attractive to the ladies."

"It's nice not to be scared all the time."

"Yeah and your knowledge transfer has made us better Vikings and will improve the quality of life. I think all of us agree that you could be a fine leader given the chance."

"_I'm sorry for attacking you. I shouldn't have questioned your loyalty or your commitment to your promise. I won't doubt you again. Now, how do we sneak into the palace and find Hiccup?"_

"Well we ask for a little help," Nissa replied with a sparkle to her eye. The others wondered what crazy idea she had in mind.

* * *

><p>The help that Nissa had in mind was asking some of the other mythos creatures that lived on the island to help sneak them into the palace. They came across a small group of sirens in a small lagoon singing. At least they assumed they were singing because Nissa had told them to plug their ears and had the dragons hover in the air. The women were lithe and curvy with long tresses of different colored hairs cascading from their heads in pale blue chiffon dresses. They all had gleaming hazel eyes and nice smiles, but their arms were wings with hands and their legs ended in bird claws Nissa slowly approached the quartet with no weapons.</p>

"So the Princess has graced us with her presences once more. You brought humans with you. Are they snacks for us to eat?" Thelxiepeia, the oldest with auburn hair. She licked her lips anticipating a snack, but her brunette sister scratched her in the back giving her a scathing look. "What, it's been ages since we feasted on the hearts of men."

"Have you forgotten the agreement that led us to this sanctuary? That we would only feast on the hearts of criminals who committed injustices against the world," Gemma informed her. Next to her the blond and black haired ladies also were wondering why the princess came here.

"Are you looking for another singing lesson? Your voice is already very melodious. You just need to work on your high notes," Peisone told her.

"What's with all the new dragons especially that Night Fury? I thought you were enemies?" Aglaope questioned.

"Ladies, I need your help sneaking my friends into the palace. I'm on a rescue mission to save my friend Hiccup. You know the one I mentioned to you last time."

"Oh the boy in furs trying not to manifest! We saw him two nights ago during an evening flight trying to escape from the Honor Guard. It was a shock to see a recruit able to keep his newfound power under control. So these are his friends? Hmm impressive," Gemma remarked.

"What do you need us to do Princess? Is it something that could get us kicked off our island and killed by sea going folk?" Thelxiepeia asked.

"Nothing that serious I just need you to sing a few songs near the palace, keep the guards distracted long enough for me to sneak my friends through the hidden tunnels into my room. After that you can come back here and everything will be okay. As payment for your services here. Fresh hearts from poachers who tried to kill us. I had the Vikings keep them on ice just incase I needed your help," Nissa said. Whistling she had the dragons regurgitate the hearts and the Sirens quickly devoured them.

"That's the most disgusting thing I've ever seen in my life. Are we sure we can trust these ladies not to kill us?" Fishlegs asked nervously. He closed his eyes as he listened to the sounds of hearts being torn apart. He could sense the other getting sick, but managing to hold their ground.

"Sorry about that, we haven't had a meal in months. Considering we no longer actively hunt for meals its harder to come by such a feast," Agalaope apologized wiping the last of the heart from her chin. The sirens all cleaned themselves off and stretched their wings.

"So, you'll help me out? I know I'm asking a lot and considering you could betray me in favor of going with your base instincts I'm putting an awful lot of trust in you four."

"Don't worry, we've got control over our natures. So just distract the guards; no maiming or permanent injury. Just a good old serenade. Sounds delightful! Come on sisters we have a concert to put on!" Peisone laughed. Her sisters joined her as they started to hum a new tune. With a burst of speed they took off past the dragons to the palace.

The Honor Guard was making their usual patrols as they made sure the palace was secured. Tonight was the night the new prince would be crowned. They were determined that nothing would go wrong. The Honor Guard was skimming the skies and chekcing all the hidden passages were secured. They were about to check the tunnel by the edge of the forest when a sweet meldoy filled the air. The lyrics were quite lovely as the song enchanted them.

"_The clouds float high and the clouds gather low. The sun shines bright in that beautiful dawn sky. Oh the clouds float high and they gather low. The winds blow a gentle breeze that carries our song. Here our voices and be enchanted. For we are sirens of lore and

legend," _the quartet sang in perfect harmony. The sirens split up as they each took a different set of guards.

Gemma landed in front of Ula and Ylwa singing them away from the forest. Peisone used her voice to persuade Fia and Kariat to look the other way so the Vikings could slip past them into the tunnel.

Agalaope used her enhanced voice to force Steinar and Davin to sleep while Thelxiepeia led Isak and Rikard on a merry chase away so the dragons could land on Nissa's balcony and enter her room. Once Nissa was certain her friends were safely in her room she signaled the Sirens and they flew away leaving the Honor Guard puzzled, but they shrugged it off.

"Good, they don't remember being enchanted. Alright you made it into the palace without being seen that's good."

"So what's next? Do we start combing the halls for Hiccup? I brought my handy hammer for breaking down walls," Gobber said.

"All of you need to stay here in my room for now. Don't make any noise or go near any windows. I'm going to talk to my aunt and see if I can find where they'll holding Hiccup. Once I have all the details I'll come get you. Be ready to leave at a moments notice. Oh have anything you like from my icebox you must be hungry well see you soon!" Nissa said hurrying out the room and heading to the Throne Room to talk with her aunt.

* * *

><p>Nissa was extremely nervous as she approached the Throne Room. She was almost certain that her aunt would discover some part of her deception or worse; proceed with the rebirth ritual without her. It would be highly dangerous not to have the original bonder there to help preserve the recruit's mind during the final transition from Draconia Daypeace, but in her aunt's current state of mind, who knew what she was capable of? Nissa only hoped that the enormous amount of perfume she put on her, combined with her fortified Dragon Heart, would be enough to keep the queen from discovering her secret. Taking a deep breath to summon her courage she opened the doors and entered the throne room.</p>

Queen Rayna was being examined by Healer Skerry and discussing the upcoming ritual when she noticed her wayward niece had entered the room. After going through the proper protocols for respect she got down to business. "Welcome home Nissa, its good to see you again, though I wonder what kept you. A simple mission such as a retrieval and distraction shouldn't take nearly as much time. I hope you can give me an explanation child."

"Apologies my Queen, it was a long journey. I easily retrieved the items, but as you know Vikings have stubbornness issues. They chased me for days and it took all my skills to prevent them from finding me. The Night Fury was especially tenacious and he managed to catch me once. It was a difficult fight and I barely managed to escape. It took a few days to recover from my injuries. I'm sorry if I worried you."

"It's alright Princess Nissa, we're both just glad that your back safe and sound. I would like you to come to my infirmary later to give you a physical. I want to make sure that your battle with the

Nightfury hasn't damaged you to badly. Remember, your body is still trying to mend itself after that terrible day," Skerry told her kindly. He was doing his best to help the Queen bond with her niece, but his efforts were once again not rewarded.

"Yes, but her physical can wait until after the ritual tonight Healer. I don't know if your aware of what's happening, because you forgot your communication mirror in your haste to return to the norther lands, but the recruit you have brought has made excellent progress. His inner dragon abilities are strong. His bond with the other Daypeaces and I is powerful. He was really coming into his newfound talents as both an artist and metal worker, but for reasons I don't quite understand he tried to escape from Xanadu. We've given him more than his people ever had."

"I tried to tell you Aunt, I mean, Queen Rayna, that his life on Berk has improved. You separated him from his friends, his family, and his dragon. Hiccup is grateful to have his leg back and the knowledge we've shared, but he's stubborn. When he sets his mind to something he won't give up until he succeeds. It's this inner strength that helped him stop the Red Death. Not to mention helped the people of Berk learn about coexisting with dragons in a harmonious manner," Nissa responded, her hands constantly twisting her arm bands, hoping that just once, she could get her aunt to listen to her.

"Watch your tongue Nissa, if you don't have the stomach to do what needs to done to ensure our future then I just may break your bond now!" Queen Rayna snapped ignoring the protests from both parties about the dangers of doing that in her current state. "I have spent all morning pouring my blood, scales, and essences into forming the rebirth egg for the ritual tonight. Healer Skerry has been keeping an eye on Hiccup, prepping him for placement while ensuring that I recover quickly. His serum for increased blood production is only a temporary solution, for after tonight, I'll need to rest for at least a week, in order to recover."

Nissa was startled at the news of her aunt's condition. She hadn't realized how serious it was until now. "Is she really in that much danger Healer Skerry? If there's a chance she may falter or end up bed ridden we should postpone the ritual another night or two. We still have three days before the completion of the lunar cycle."

"I understand your concerns, but I assure you that the Queen will be healthy enough to complete the ritual as long as she doesn't strain herself to much for the rest of the day. You will be helping the new Prince with his duties with your usual avidity to duty during the recovery period. If you ladies will excuse me I have to finish preparing Hiccup for the transfer. Until tonight," Healer Skerry said taking his leave. As he left he glanced back at the two family members he tried once again reaching out with his Dragon Heart to feel some connection with the two family members. Nissa's was warm inside with concern for Hiccup and sadness at her aunt's rejection. He could feel her trying to reach out and bond with her, but Rayna was a sheet of ice. She kept pushing back the bonds and tightening her grip on the only other bond they both shared. His mind was full of worry for both.

"I suppose you should prepare yourself for the ritual. We're performing it tonight in the solaria at moonhigh. Don't be late and I swear to you by Helios if you mess this up Nissa, I don't care if

your Ola's daughter, I will seal your inner dragon and banish you from Xanadu. Am I clear?"

"What? You can't do that! If the ritual fails it's not my fault, but yo...."

"Do I make myself _**clear?**_"

"Yes Queen Rayna. Is it alright if I visit Hiccup? Were is he being held now?"

"None of your business child. You'll see him tonight and that's all that matters. Now get out of my sight!" Nissa put on a brave face, not letting one tear fall as she marched right out of the room back into the corridors. She didn't have words for how much pain her aunt's rejection caused her. They were all that was left of their family, yet, she was treated as if she was a disease. It wasn't her fault that the other members of their family died no matter what her aunt thought. She was certain with a little more time her abilities would have unlocked and Hiccup wouldn't be here. No matter what she was going to keep her promise to him.

* * *

><p>The riders and their dragons were anxious as they waited for Nissa to return. The dragons weren't happy being crammed in such a small space. The room was very large and spacious, but when you tried to fit seven humans and six dragons in one space, it was nearly unbearable. Everyone was on top of one another and the dragons were fighting over the food they had found. The riders were arguing amongst themselves when Nissa returned giving them an incredulous look.</p>

"I could hear you halfway down the hall fighting! Do you want to draw attention to yourselves?"

"Sorry, just a bit of cabin fever. Have you learned where Hiccup is being held? Can we get there without being seen and sneak him back to the ship? Have you figure out a way to restore him to normal?" Stoick asked in a flurry of questions.

"Hiccup's being held in a secure location until tonight when he'll be placed in the rebirth egg for the final part of the ritual. The egg is constructed using our own blood, scales, and essences mixed with the artificial shell. Once placed inside the egg the final parts of the transformation begin. A metamorphosis takes place as the materials used seep into the recruits body and merge with the inner dragon. The bondmate uses their Dragon Heart to guide them into fully integrating their new instincts and showing them how to shift from one form to the next. As soon as the process is complete; their former humanity is gone and they hatch into their new more powerful dragon form, before reverting to their new human one. My aunt will be using her bond with Hiccup to complete the process, possibly attempting to break my own with him."

"Why would she do that? Does she really hate you that much?" Astrid asked her curiously. She recalled what Nissa had told them earlier about the nature of the bonds her people shared with one another, including the dangers of them. "I thought that breaking the bonds with one another was something your kind tried to avoid."

"Normally yes, but since Hiccup is supposed to become our reincarnated Prince he would be carrying my cousin blood. Having us bonded as mates might prove difficult, because in essences, we'd be family. My aunt could be trying to avoid having problems later on, but I do agree she might be doing this out of spite."

"Blah blah about mates and romance, how do we prevent this transformation from being completed?"

"If we can't prevent his placement in the egg then our best chance would be to break him out before moonhigh. The ritual is taking place in the solaria on the far west side. The room is basically a large glass encased tower with a high dome and semi transparent walls of special mineral. All the members of the Honor Guard will be there along with Healer Skerry and his nurse in case something goes wrong. I'll be there as well to step in to help guide the final process. Extra security will be posted all around the room along with magical/science protection to prevent intruders."

"How do you expect us to bypass all that and sneak into this ritual? The chances of that happening are the same as a Viking not wanting to pillage a village. Wait, never mind, you have a plan to get us past all that?" Stoick remarked as the princess nodded her head.

"I do have a plan. The dragons are going to have to slip in through the glass ceiling while I get you in through a hidden passageway. Barf and Belch could lay down a smoke screen with Meatlug covering his back. Hookfang and Stormfly should take out the guards. Thornado can handle the doctors. While the rest of you are helping them out and preventing my aunt from interfering, Toothless and I will get Hiccup. If he's in the egg then you'll need my blood to break it prematurely, while Toothless's claws and fire should help tear it open. In the event this all falls apart Stoick you need to be prepared to challenge my aunt for Hiccup."

"I will, do I need to say or do anything to issue the challenge?"

"Just state who you are, your relation to Hiccup and your desire to prove your love for him. Show my aunt that Hiccup has a place on Berk and that he's needed. I really hope we can pull this off," Nissa said. Everyone silently agreed and began to prepare for the rescue tonight.

* * *

><p>As soon as darkness fell everyone assembled into place. The dragons used the cover of night to get into position as the Vikings were led through the passageways and hidden behind a painting in the solaria. They could see through some peepholes what was going on in the room. The room was so beautiful with decorative furniture pieces and art work. A ring of candles lit the room in a soft glow. In the center of the room was a large golden egg with weird writing all over it. Everyone was tense as the Honor Guard secured the room checking for any signs of danger. Thankfully they didn't check behind the painting.</p>

"I'm getting bored. When's this ritual going to start? The moon rose awhile ago," Tuffnut complained.

"Would you be quite already? We don't want to be discovered!" Ruffnut hissed.

"All of you shut up its starting!" The doors to the room opened and in glided Queen Rayna in all her glory. Following her was Nissa and a few other servants playing musical instruments. Next, came in Healer Skerry and his nurse Valma. Stoick's heart nearly leaped out of his chest as a bronze and silver palanquin was carried into the room. The rider was strapped down on the pillow and unconscious. As the curtains parted they saw it was Hiccup. The boy looked different; he was taller, fuller and they saw the lavender highlights in his hair that had grown down to the base of his neck. He was dressed in similar clothes of the Queen, with a small crown on his head.

"Hiccup," Stoick whispered softly. Gobber had to hold him tight to prevent him from rushing out and on the roof the other dragons were doing the same with Toothless. "Why is he strapped down and unconscious? Did they do something to him?"

"Remember, Nissa said they're probably keeping him sedated so he doesn't put up a fight. He's okay don't worry."

Queen Rayna turned smiling happily at the assembled crowd. "Tonight is a joyous occasion for all Draconia Daypeaces. In the ages past since we've been blessed by Helios's gift we have carried out our mission of peace and justice for all with great dignity. Our people have learned so much from other cultures as we continue to develop our own sharing our gift with kindred souls. Tonight we celebrate as new recruit takes the final steps into his journey to join our ranks. This recruit is special for not only is Hiccup Horrendous Haddock the Third becoming one of us, but he is blessed to carry on as our new Prince and my son!" Cheers erupted from the assembled. Nissa slowly edged towards the painting as the palanquin bearers removed Hiccup from his restraints and carried him towards the egg. Queen Rayna pressed her palm on the shell which dissolved slightly to create an opening. Just as they were about to place him inside the rescue party attacked.

The dragons broke through the ceiling sending glass shards everywhere. The members of the Honor Guard reacted swiftly going after the dragons just as Nissa opened the passage letting the Vikings in. They charged forward attacking the servants whose instruments turned into weapons to defend themselves. Queen Rayna ordered the bearers to place Hiccup inside the egg as she strode into battle against these intruders. It was utter chaos and confusion.

Amongst the chaos Nissa was swinging her mace at some of the regular soldiers who'd entered upon hearing the fight. She hit three upside the head, rolled two more over her shoulders and then brought it down on the last one's chest where it got stuck in the breastplate. Discarding it she ran for the egg calling out to Toothless who smacked away his foes. They had almost reached their destination when they were all blinded by a flash of light. Nissa sank to the ground as she felt someone tearing apart her mind through the bond. A swipe from a dragon claw sent her tumbling to the floor where she was quickly restrained by Karat and Davin.

Nissa struggled to break their grip, but was unable to. She watched

helplessly as the others were brought down by weapons and sheer numbers. Even the dragons were restrained as chains popped up from the ground and secured their legs and tails. As she gazed up at her aunt's scowling face she knew in her heart that this rescue mission just got a lot harder than they anticipated.

6. Aerial Battle

The entire room was silent as Queen Rayna continued to glare furiously at her struggling niece. Her anger caused a strange reaction as hidden magical stones appeared on the walls. She let out a growl of words under her breath while snapping her fingers. More chains popped out the ground latching onto the Vikings securing them to the ground. The gemstones sparkled and started to hum. In mere seconds they released burst of rainbow energy that struck Nissa. The teen started to thrash and scream as her body was bombarded by magically enhanced light.

The Honor Guard looked questioningly at their Queen while the servants covered their ears to block out the screaming. The regular guards watched in a mix of fascination and disbelief as the Queen stepped on a panel on the floor. The panel activated another booby trap; this time a sheet of ice popped out of the ground and started to encase Nissa's legs. Healer Skerry couldn't stand by and do nothing. "My Queen that is enough! No matter what your niece has done she doesn't deserve to suffer like this! This is not the way to handle the situation. Please, I beg you to calm down and think rationally about this."

Queen Rayna was tempted to continue punishing her niece for her transgressions, but didn't want to push herself to much in her weakened state. She whispered a string of words deactivating the magical stones before nodding at Kariat to melt the ice off Nissa. She took a few deep breaths, composed her features and then addressed her niece. "I hope you have a good explanation of why you betrayed your people. You told me you were returning to Berk to pick up a few things and then lead them away from our home. Instead you brought them to Xanadu to steal the Daypeaces' last hope for a future. I want to know why after you promised to bring Hiccup here to ensure our survival; you turned around and brought a rescue party to our home."

"I made a promise to him that I would reunite him with his family and friends. Aunt Rayna this isn't right and you know it. We've never held a recruit prisoner before or forced them into a role they didn't want. Tyra and Helios would be ashamed of how we dishonored their memory in such a callous manner. The Draconia Daypeaces have always used our hybrid nature to ensure peace, justice, and hope for both humanity and mythos kind. My parents taught me to always do the right thing and think of others before myself. Uncle Aksel wanted to use the Gateways to bring people closer together, to share cultural ideas. To learn more about the world's mysteries and magic with one another. You know it was Arkin's dream to lead us into a golden age of knowledge and understanding. I know how much your hurting at the loss of our family..."

"How could you possibly understand what I'm going through! This is your fault that were in this situation to begin with. That our entire traveling party was slaughtered!"

"Hey, don't accuse Nissa of things she's not responsible for!" Fishlegs shouted bravely before being kicked by Rikard. "Silence, its rude to interrupt royalty."

"He's right! Nissa showed us what happened nearly five months ago. It wasn't anyone's fault what happened. Those poachers were ruthless. They would have attacked you no matter what anyone did or didn't do," Snotlout argued logically. He let out a yowl of pain as Ula pinched his ear.

"Look bad things happen to the all of us. We've all lost people we care about in the past. Our dragons lost friends to the Red Death or us during the raids," Astrid told Queen Rayna. She tugged in vain at her chains trying to break free. "The important thing is to stay strong and keep living. You're Nissa's only family. Instead of treating her like she's the enemy you should be grieving together."

"Be quiet all of you! None of you could possibly understand the truth of the situation. You say Nissa showed you what happened well she was unconscious through most of it!"

"We encountered those poachers are our way here lady. Your niece fought bravely to defend us. Those men were going to lock her up and beat her until she submitted, but she refused to give in. If you had seen her fight and the way she led us to victory before we sank their ship you would have been proud. She had to relieve the memories of watching the events through the eyes of the poachers. It was the worst thing I've ever seen anyone go through; a weaker person would have succumbed to the horrors not her. Nissa is a great warrior and has a good heart. She has the potential to be a great leader," Gobber informed the Queen who had nothing, but a stone cold look on her face.

"I have heard enough! Nissa a great leader? The girl has never been anything except average and a disappointment. My sister and her husband were truly exceptional. When Ola danced in the sky it was enough to make you weep. She was graceful in battle and her compassion knew no bounds. She always was there for me despite the years apart helping me lead our people. Ragnar was the greatest architect we ever had! He built half of the city! His metal works dot the island! I loved his sense of humor. My husband Aksel was my best friend. He knew everything about me. He used to romance me every night with poetry. He protected anyone who needed help. He shaped so many lives. My son Arkin was truly remarkable. He was an artist, a philosopher, a truly wonderful young man who had so much more to give! If Nissa hadn't distracted us with her stupid tricks we'd have sensed those awful men beforehand and then we would have avoided them. There is a reason she was never trained in royal protocol. Her abilities are weak not worthy of her bloodline! How can she lead our people when she can't use any of the royal gifts? She has betrayed us and I will seal her inner dragon before exiling her from our home!"

"How can you call yourself a Queen? The way you're treating Nissa is deplorable. She is your family, your sister's legacy. Through her your sister is never gone. She needs you as much as you need her. Sticking together is important. Only by being there for each other can you heal. Both of you have so much in common if you just give her

the chance to show it. I understand that your trying to save your people, but stealing my son to replace yours is wrong!"

"You're one to talk about family and understanding one another. Whether you admit it or not I have formed a strong bond with Hiccup. Fifteen years you ignored him, ridiculed him for his physical appearances even disowning him at one point. I have encouraged him, helped developed his talents. I listened to him whenever he wanted to talk about anything. I shared our island, our culture, everything. His humanity is gone; he's one of us now."

"No he isn't Aunt Rayna. You have bonded with Hiccup and its strong really strong, but mine is stronger. He's still human for now. His powers are great, but anyone who can keep their inner dragon from manifesting to preserve their humanity is telling you something. Please let Hiccup go home. I know I can lead us, he was helping me! He thought he discovered a way to awaken my dormant powers. If you would just release him..."

"The ritual will continue as planned. I have invested my blood, my essences, my very soul into this. I have come to care deeply for Hiccup. He's not Arkin I know that, Hiccup is more sensitive and his skills at the forge are extraordinary. His mannerisms are unique and funny. I've never seen someone so determined and strong willed with a love of dragons like him. I'd be willing to do anything to protect him and make him happy here," Queen Rayna said, her Dragon Heart connecting with everyone in the room. She wasn't kidding. They could feel her genuine love for Hiccup. He did mean a lot to her more than they realized. Her bond with him was keeping her going, but they had no choice but to break it no matter what he consequences.

"If you think I'm going to let you proceed with this ritual then you're mistaken. Queen Rayna Scandi of Xanadu, I Stoick the Vast Haddock, Chief of Berk challenge you for my son Hiccup. I have transverse miles of ocean, fought poachers and marched through the untamed forests to get here. I brought all the riders who are his friends with me. They all love and care about him very much. He is Gobber's apprentice and the dragons representative. He is cared and loved by all on Berk. He is needed there and I will fight to my last breath to ensure he is returned home safely."

"As if I will accept a challenge by a savage uncultured fool."

"My Queen you can't ignore the challenge no matter who issues it, its one of our most sacred laws," Davin responded hesitantly, not wishing to argue with his Queen, but knowing proper procedure had to be followed in this case no matter what. "The laws about recruits and challenges are very specific. They were created by your ancestors to protect the rights of the recruits and their families."

"Davin is right my Queen. We've all felt guilty about the kidnapping, yes kidnapping not retrieval of a recruit. We should have followed procedure asking Hiccup to come instead of what we did. If we had maybe explained the situation from the start perhaps Nissa wouldn't have felt it necessary to bring outsiders to the island," Ylwa mentioned from her position of watching the teens. The other Honor Guard members shifted uncomfortably knowing they were on shaky ground with her Highness.

"The challenge exists for a reason. If a recruit is loved so much by

their original culture and they are needed to help their people to keep peace, then we fight to determine who has the bigger claim. The challengers are always given a chance to state their case and fight for their loved ones. Its proof in our eyes that perhaps they'd be better off at home then here," Steinar reminded her.

"We all love Hiccup and want him to become our new Prince, but not at the cost of losing ourselves and all we stand for. You need to do what is right and accept the challenge," Ula informed Rayna. "If you don't then we'll have no choice except to release the captives and we'll start fighting once more. People could be gravely injured or die. I know you don't want that."

Queen Rayna growled and you could see the look of frustration on her face. Nissa reached out once more with her Dragon Heart trying to connect and help her aunt see reason, but was once more rejected. Nissa refused to give up reaching out to everyone in the room trying to calm them down. She twisted her head talking to the dragons asking Toothless to stop struggling against his bonds before he hurt himself. The Nightfury listened to her and stop fighting his eyes were locked on the rebirth egg wanting desperately to help his friend. Seeing this seemed to help the Queen make up her mind.

Rayna snapped her fingers and the chains fell off Stoick and Thornado. Speaking in her native tongue the remainder of the skylight retracted into the roof and the gems started shining once more. Queen Rayna walked forward pressing her hand against the rebirth egg sending a jolt of magic into it to form a protective field around it. "I accept your challenge Stoick the Vast. We shall have an aerial battle with me in my dragon form and you riding yours. The rules of the challenge are that we can only use our skills and wits to fight. There will be no interference from anyone unless its to save a life should one of us strike a blow causing another to fall from the sky. The challenge is over when one of us can no longer fight on. If you win; I'll release Hiccup and return him to normal. You'll be allowed to leave with an escort to help you get back to Berk. Should I win; then all of you will remain my prisoners, your dragons will be placed in the forests with magical binding to keep them from returning to the palace and Nissa will be exiled after Hiccup awakens from the ritual. Do you agree to these terms?"

"Yes, and a Viking doesn't break a promise."

"We shall see about that. Mount your dragon this challenge begins now!" Queen Rayna shouted over the protests of Healer Skerry and Nissa. The gems light up brightly as rainbow lights strobe over the Queen's body filling her with power. She manifest her inner dragon which was a third larger then Nissa's and her red markings were different. Hers were only on her underbelly and one leg. Her horns, wings, and tail blade were larger and more streamlined. With a roar heard over all the island the two combatants shot into the sky climbing higher and higher until no one could see them in the night sky.

As soon as they leveled out Rayna unleashed her blue fire in a wide spread pattern trying to take out her foes quickly, but the duo dove under the flames and came at her from underneath. She twisted out of the way only receiving a glancing blow to her shoulder. Ignoring the pain she let loose a series of quick fireballs that Thornado counted with own setting the sky ablaze. The Thunderdrome let loose his

signature wail landing a serious blow sending Rayna tumbling in the sky.

Rayna flared her wings and did a back-flip to help reposition herself once more. Hearing Thornado come after her she hit him in the jaw with her tail breaking several teeth. She quickly followed that up by slashing at her foes with her claws. Stoick flinched backwards narrowly avoiding being sliced open. When she tried it again she received a face full of horns as he headbutted her. Her own horns and nose cover took most of the damage, but her vision blurred as she tried to make sense of what was going on. She felt someone jump on her back hitting her again and again. She bulked back and forth as she tried to throw Stoick off her succeeding when he tripped over her crest. As he fell he made a grab for Thornado's reins managing to get himself back on his dragon's back, but not before both were hit with yellow flames slowing down their reaction time while lessening their power.

"Come on old friend we can't give up just because the battle's gotten harder. Let's show her we have learned a thing or two about fighting a Daypeace!"

"_No queen is ever going to get the best of me again! Hold on tight!" _ Thornado shouted. The dragon pushed himself flying faster and faster until he was a streaming bullet. He lined up his sights on Rayna who was hovering in the air with an open mouth. Opening his own jaw wide he came at her only to bounce off an orange barrier of flames that popped up at the last second. The Thunderdrome and his rider were dazed and confused for several moments.

"Thornado watch out!" Stoick shouted as Rayna got ready to bite down on his friend's head. Straddling his legs tightly around his mount he used his beefy hands to grab Rayna's mouth forcefully keeping her jaws open so she didn't bite down. "Just try it lady, I'm not some pushover!" Stoick slammed her jaws shut and twisted her head down causing her visions to swarm. Thornado kept trying to grab her in his jaws, but she twisted right out of his grip landing on the dragons back. Snarling she dug her talons in deep drawing blood.

"_Ahhhhhhhhhhh! Get off my back! I'm going to drown you in the sea!" _

_ "Not likely, you may have the advantage in the sea, but I'm not going to let you near it!" _Queen Rayna growled as she dug deeper. She was in a position to do some serious damage as she used her bulk to force the dragon into a downward spiral. Stoick was sent tumbling down towards Rayna who was waiting to gore him with her horns. Refusing to give up he kicked her hard dislodging the female. His boot print was clearly seen on her chest and she seemed to be slowing down a bit.

Stoick crawled back to his usual spot turning Thornado around.
"Alright hit her with everything you got! I want her downed!"

Rayna saw the oncoming attack and acted swiftly by singing a series of notes. Far below the gems in the solaria responded to her call. Their inner light was magnified as the spell forced them to release their power through long range prisms. Rayna was bathed in pure light helping her recover her strength. Her face filled with joy as she

cuffed her "hands" and a ball of pure light formed. As the dangerous roars got closer she hurled her attack. The collision created an explosion that was seen and felt by the entire island.

"I thought this was a battle of skill and wit! How is using magic fair?"

_ "Its cheating to use your light powers at night!"_

_ "Its not cheating to use my skills and inborn talents to win this fight! If you two are going to whine about it, then I'll just have to finish this fight quickly!" _ Rayna snapped as her entire body flashed in a rainbow of colors. This fight was entering its second round and it was going to be brutal.

In the solaria below Nissa was watching the whole aerial battle with horror on her face. She struggled harder to get out of Kariat and Davin's grip. "Let me go! We have to stop this fight now!"

"Princess calm down, the challenge will be over soon enough, there's no reason for you to act like this," Davin tried to placate her, but the girl refused twisting about trying to break their grip. "We can't interfere no matter what remember?"

"Stop Nissa, please if you keep struggling your going to hurt yourself worse."

"You don't understand, I thought the challenge would be a battle of the minds or spirit! You have to stop them before they kill each other!"

"Nissa, no one's going to die, your aunt laid down the rules that the first person to knock the other back to the ground loses," Ruffnut pointed out.

"Yeah the Chief is going to win no problem. Even with your aunt using her tricks no one can defeat Stoick the Vast," Tuffnut added.

"You don't understand she can't be pushing herself this much, not in her condition. Tell them Healer Skerry please! Tell them my aunt isn't fit for a battle such as this!"

"Princess I can't force your aunt to listen to my advise. She is terribly weak after expanding so much energy into creating the rebirth egg. The serum I gave her to replenish her blood is helping her..." Healer Skerry started to respond when Nissa interrupted him.

"You said that if she didn't take it easy, that if she didn't rest for at least a week she'd burn out and possibly die! My aunt's health has been fragile since the loss of our family. She's barely managing to hold the island together. Can't you feel how much pain Xanadu is in? Our entire island and its people are frightened! I can see how hard all of us are struggling to keep our natures under control. If my aunt keeps drawing on magic and fighting like this she'll die!" Nissa argued.

"But doesn't that mean Stoick wins by default?" Fishlegs questioned timidly. "Not that I want your aunt to die, but doesn't that mean Stoick wins and Hiccup's returned to us?"

"Take a look up there Fishlegs, Stoick's lost in a bloody rage, he's not even thinking his plans through. If this fight goes on much longer he's going to make a fatal mistake and both him and Thornado will die," Gobber told the group. He had seen Stoick in a similar situation years ago right after Val died. His friend had been reckless taking to many risks and it had taken most of the island to convince him to stop. "Your princess is right, they'll both die if this keeps up. You have to stop this fight now!"

"We can't go against the Queen's orders! Besides you could just be trying to trick us so you can take Hiccup back before a winner is decided," Ylwa pointed out.

_ "Use your senses! Your queen has lost her mind! She's not acting like a Daypeace, but a crazed monster!" _Hookfang growled.

_ "This isn't about whose going to win, its about saving three lives and possibly your entire island!" _Meatlug shouted.

_ "Do what is right and release us! We can help stop this before anyone dies!" _Belch and Barf shouted.

The remaining dragons and riders all pleaded with the Honor Guard and those assembled. The servants looked like they were ready to give in, but the regular guard were brandishing their weapons shouting at the prisoners to be quiet. Healer Skerry and Valma were eying the egg and the Honor Guard was debating what to do when the choice was taken out of their hands.

Nissa's Dragon Heart was going into overdrive as she connected with everyone around her. She could feel the life slipping away from everyone she cared about. Her mind brushed with Hiccup's sensing that his transformation was speeding up. His humanity was going be wiped away in a mere hour if she didn't do something. With a surge of power the gems responded to her startling everyone as she glowed a rainbow of colors breaking free of the Honor Guard's grip and releasing the others.

"I refuse to allow anyone I love to die! Ruff, Tuff, Snotlout, take your dragons and contain the servants and regular guards. Gobber capture Healer Skerry and Valma and help them prepare for injuries. Fishlegs handle the Honor Guard with Meatlug. Use your knowledge to convince them to help us. Astrid, I need you and Stormfly to take out the force field and start working on cracking that egg. I'll be back in a few minutes to help free Hiccup!" Nissa commanded jumping onto Toothless back and transforming her leg to operate the saddle.

_ "What are you doing? We need to stay here and free Hiccup before the metamorphosis is complete!" _

_ "I need your speed and strength to get up to the fight quickly. My dragon form is to slow and I'm weakened. If you help me keep them apart and slowed down I can stop the fight. I'll give you my blood so you can free Hiccup, but we need to get up there now!" _Nissa pleaded.

_ "Hold on tight this is going to be a bumpy flight!" _Toothless let out the cry of a Nightfury taking off like a comet as they soared

into the sky plasma balls blazing. The sight of two mortal enemies working together was enough to stun the crowd stupid for a few minutes.

The two leaders were locked in battle a deadly embrace. Thornado had managed to damage one of Rayna's wings, but she had gutted his underside. Stoick was bleeding from wounds and the fighting was getting more intense as magic, roars, and fire collided again and again. Rayna was using her magic to increase her speed and power while trying to lower Thornado's defenses. Stoick was using the knowledge bestowed to him by Nissa attack Rayna in her vulnerable spots such as her tail and wing joints. Neither combatant looked as if they were going to give up until the other died.

"_I grow weary of this battle! I will show you the true power of a descendent of Light!"_

_ "Bring it on queenie! I'll take anything you throw at us and give it back double!" _

"By Odin's Beard I'll make you pay for trying to take my son from me!"

As the two combatants rushed at each other with their most powerful attacks a blur of black and pink streaked between the two spinning around shooting plasma balls. The balls force them to back off and regroup as a stream of orange fire created a barrier sphere around them. Though confused both leaders tried to get out striking with full force at their prisons. They looked startled when Nissa and Toothless appeared between the two with looks of determination on their faces.

"Both of you have to stop fighting right now please! You're pushing yourselves past your limits, if you keep going all of you will die! This isn't the way to settle this! We should be talking instead."

"There's no room for talking when someone kidnaps another child and tries to perform a magical ritual on them against their will!"

_ "If you think for a second that I will allow the only hope for our future to slip away from us then you are mistaken! I will not allow a child to be returned to such uncultured and dangerous conditions!" _

_ "Listen to yourselves, Hiccup is not an a scrap of meat to fight over! He's a living, breathing person who wants both of you to be friends! I know that Nightfuries are suppose to be enemies, but if Nissa and I can work together, why can't you two make peace as well? Hiccup is the smartest person I know, he's got to have an idea that would help save Xanadu. If you just listen for a moment to what Nissa has to say..." _Toothless advert when the barriers shattered. Rayna let loose a widely dispersed wall of fire forcing the duo to dive underneath. Stoick responded in kind nearly clipping the two as they looped around the fire.

Nissa was sweating like a storm as she urged Toothless upward again using the cover of night to camouflage them. Right when the two fighters were about to clash again they struck knocking Rayna off course. When Thornado let loose another round of fire Toothless shot

plasma balls causing them to miss their target. As they hovered above the fighting the moonsbeams filled Nissa with a weak power. Channeling the energy she fired a weak bolt at the two dragons hoping to gain their attention. She got it.

"They're after us now! Come on see if you can lead them back to the ground!"

_ "I'll try, be ready to return fire if they target us!" _Toothless shouted doing a step dive. They were followed from behind by the two leaders who both wanted to take out the interlopers for meddling in their battle. As they headed to the ground both parties unleashed their most powerful attacks on them. Nissa adjust the tail fin at the last second to dodge to the right earning a glancing blow on her back. Ignoring the pain she adjusted the tail commanding Toothless to go back up. Partially transforming her mouth she let out a blast of blue fire catching her aunt and Stoick off guard. She smiled thinking they'd both be tired landing, but to her shock they brushed it off!

"No way, their rage is so strong my powers aren't having any effect on them!"

"_There ignoring us and heading back up to continue their fight. I can smell blood from both of them. They're going to fight to end no matter what we do."_

"I can't give up! Maybe if I use green fire on them the knowledge of the dangers would make them stop or yellow fire would decrease their reserves. I'll even hit them with purple if it means they'll start loving each other."

"_The only one who can stop them now is Hiccup! We need to free him!"_

Nissa shook her head knowing she needed to stay, but Toothless was right. She leaned forward until her arm was inside Toothless's gummy jaws. "You'll need my blood to break the egg. Take it and free Hiccup. He'll know what to do. I'm going to stay up here and run interference. Don't argue we don't have a lot of time just do it!"

_ "As you wish."_ Toothless's teeth sprang open and bit down gently on her arm drawing blood. The Daypeace ignored the overwhelming urge to pass out as her blood coated his teeth. He let her go and she stood up on his back. With a mighty heave he sent her flying into the air watching her manifest. Once he was sure she was okay he turned around heading for his rider barely managing to control his flight.

The fighting had turned into a scuffle. Gobber had Healer Skerry and Valma backed into a corner threatening them with his metal hand while the trio had managed to tie up the servants and regular guard. Fishlegs was talking with a subdued Honor Guard while Stormfly and Astrid attacked the egg with all their might. They had managed to break the field, but were no closer to cracking the shell.

_ "Its no use Astrid! My tail spikes aren't making a dent in the egg and your ax is just bouncing off the shell."_

"I know that Stormfly, but we can't give up. We need to free Hiccup

now!" Astrid replied not realizing she had just understood her dragon perfectly. The call of a Nightfury forced everyone to jump back in fright. Toothless hit the egg at full force knocking off its dais. With teeth dripping with blood he tore into the egg ripping chunks off. Within seconds Hiccup was free lying on the floor unconscious.

He looked so different. His arms and legs were covered in pink and red scales. Small purple horns were coming out of his head and on his back were his wings. The Vikings wondered if they were to late, that his humanity was gone. Noticing their frightened looks Healer Skerry pushed past Gobber and approached Toothless cautiously.

_ "Stay back! I won't let you hurt my friend!" _

"Peace Nightfury, I'm not here to hurt your friend. Despite his looks he is still human, the transformation hasn't been completed. I can still reverse it later. Right now, I need to check him over to make sure he's okay and then I'll wake him up. You have to trust me I took an oath to help all beings in need."

_ "How do I know I can trust you?" _

"You don't, but what choice do you have?" Growling Toothless backed up and Healer Skerry knelt next to the boy and started checking him over. After a few anxious minutes he reached into his robe pulling out smelling salts waving them under his patient's nose. In seconds Hiccup woke up coughing and sputtering. "Easy, easy you've been through a lot."

"I'll say, what is in that stuff? Its smells really potent! Ahhh! Toothless! I'm so happy to see you buddy!" Hiccup let out a laugh of delight as he was reunited with his best friend. The other riders and dragons were soon all over him hugging and crying. The Daypeaces smiled at the sight, but the happy moment was broken by sounds of explosions and roars from up in the sky. Pushing them all away Hiccup addressed the Daypeaces. "This fight has to stop right now or otherwise the entire island is going to sink. I'm not the only one hearing Xanadu cry out in pain. Those tremors are just going to get worse the more injured Rayna gets."

"Hiccup why do you care what happens to them? They kidnapped you and tried to turn you into one of them! Look at yourself!" Snotlout shouted at his cousin who blatantly ignored him. "We came all this way to rescue you and now you want to stay and help them? That crazy queen..."

"Queen Rayna isn't crazy or mean she's just a mother whose suffered a huge loss. Yeah I'm angry about what they did to me, but at the same time I understand. I care about Queen Rayna just as much as I care about you. I know this doesn't make much sense to you guys. I don't know if its Arkin's blood or my own nature, but I can't standby and let people die needlessly."

"We are at your service young Hiccup. This has gone on long enough. What do you need us to do?" Steinar asked as the Honor Guard stood at attention.

"I need you to evacuate the city and use your connection to the island to keep it together. I would tap into some of the magic

reserves here to magnify your powers. Gobber, I need you to stay here and start building some stretchers to carry the injured. Use the scraps here to help Healer Skerry prepare for casualties. Guys were going up there and bringing the fighters to the ground. Astrid and Stormfly; you get my dad off Thornado's back and Snotlout and Hookfang will muzzle him. Ruffnut, Tuffnut, Fishlegs you handle Rayna. I'll back up Nissa helping her out. Hopefully between the two us we can make sure no one gets hurt and convince the two of them to stop fighting. I know how to unlock her full potential. Let's go people!" Hiccup commanded. The riders took off with him soaring into the night sky.

"Do you think they'll be able to pull off this miracle?" Healer Skerry questioned Gobber as the Honor Guard headed out. "The fate of our home and its people hang in the balance."

"Don't worry Hiccup's the most stubborn Viking next to Stoick. I have faith in him that everything will work out, but just in case we should prepare for the worst."

Nissa was up in the sky doing her best to quell the fighting. She had done her best to get the two combatants to acknowledge the danger they were in, but they were ignoring her words. Stoick had pulled out his dagger and sword slicing at anyone who had come near. She had managed to grab the dagger and dropping it in the ocean, but in his battle rage mind he'd attacked her thinking she was her aunt. Blood dripped from her calf from where he had sliced her. Ignoring the pain she circled back getting in front of her aunt. When the larger Daypeace came after her she lashed out with her claws grabbing her aunts front paws/hands.

_ "Aunt Rayna listen to me for once! If you keep pushing your body like this you'll go into shock and die! Please let me help you, let my blood heal you ahhhhh!" _

_ "Your interference is not welcomed niece! I only asked for help if I was falling from the sky. Trust me when I say that won't happen to me, but your over sized human friend!" _Rayna hissed headbutting her. When Nissa refused to let go she started moving her paws/hands back and forth trying to fling her off. In the end Nissa had to let go and use her agility to bank off to the side so she wasn't in the line of fire from Thornado. Queen Rayna summoned a light screen to shield her from the fire before turning into tendrils of light. She whipped them around trying to knock Stoick off his dragon only for him to cut them in half with his sword.

_ "I grow weary of this challenge. I have tried to show you mercy for the sake of your former child. However you seem determined not to yield so I will end this now by taking your lives!" _

_ "Mercy? I'll show you no mercy by ripping you in half!" _

"Prepare to die monster!"

_ "NO STOP THIS RIGHT NOW!" _

Suddenly a volley of fire erupted from all directions forcing everyone to scatter. Roars of different dragons filled the sky as the riders entered into the fray. Following their commands they split off into their two teams as Hiccup and Toothless flew over to Nissa to

make sure the girl was alright.

"Nissa, my good you're really hurt! I can feel your body beginning to weaken under the stress. You need to land and be checked over by Healer Skerry!" Hiccup shouted at her. She shook her head gesturing below them were their friends were engaged with trying to gain control of the adults so they could guide them back to the ground. "I understand, but your in as much danger as them if you keep this up. Your old wounds could reopen and..."

_ "Hiccup, save your breath. She's as stubborn as you are and won't give up until the mission is complete. We need to use all our power to end this challenge here and now." _

"You're right buddy, let's do this together. Nissa, follow my lead!" The three of them climbed higher into the sky and then started diving towards their targets. Using their superior senses they locked onto their prey taking in the whole scene before them. They could hear Astrid trying to reason with Stoick and smell Snotlout and Hookfang as they tried to use the chains to lasso Stoick and Thornado only to fail miserably. They could feel the Twins delight and taste Fishlegs courage as they held on for dear life as they did their best to contain the furious Queen. Most of all they could see Xanadu far below where the Honor Guard struggled to keep the island in one piece and the people safe. "Its now or never!"

The three of them announced their presence by roaring loudly. Toothless unleashed his plasma balls dispersing the wild attacks. Hiccup felt the power building inside him and released it as a streak of condensed light nailed his dad's sword shattering it. Nissa used her own weak moonbeam shafts to disable her aunts magical connection. Banking around the three of them danced about drawing attacks further weakening the adults. Their Dragon Hearts worked in unison as they both linked up with Stoick and Rayna pushing through their rage with hopes to dispel it.

_ "There's no more reason to fight. This battle has been rendered null and void now that Hiccup is free. The rage you feel is killing you both. Take a few deep breaths and calm yourselves. Connect once more with reality, see that there is another path to take. " _

_ "Dad, I'm fine now you need to listen to me! I know that your angry and you want to punish Queen Rayna, but think about the consequences of your actions! You've seen what happens when dragons are needlessly slaughtered. The people of Xanadu need their queen. We can make peace with them if you just trust me!" _

_ "Both you stubborn adults listen to your kids for once and your lives. Its the only way they'll survive!" _

_ "If your talking with us using the Dragon Heart then you're one of us now." _

"If I have to bleed my son dry to remove your taint I will!" The force of the adults anger broke the connection forcing the youths out their heads.

Toothless hovered in the air with Nissa wondering what they could do next when he felt his rider unbuckle himself. Looking up he watched as Hiccup flapped his wings and shakily rose into the air under his

own power. He stumbled nearly falling, but managed to right himself. Both the Nightfury and Daypeace looked at him questioningly. "Its okay buddy, I'm fine. I think the only way we can stop this is if I confront my dad. Nissa you need to do the same with your aunt."

_ "What do you think I've been doing from the start? Nothing works not even my new powers can make her listen to me." _

"Nissa, you have to have confidence in yourself. I realized the reason you struggled to awaken your dormant powers was because you were holding yourself back. You lacked self confidence to believe in your own abilities, to afraid that you'll make a mistake. Look around you, all your friends are here right now giving you their support, friendship, and belief in you. I believe in you and so does Toothless. Your family all believed in you and thought you could become a great leader. Trust in yourself and their nothing you can't do," Hiccup told her. Leaving her with those thoughts he flew towards his dad with Toothless trailing behind by a weak light rope.

Stoick and Thornado had shaken off the teens and their dragons. They were lining up for the kill shot when someone appeared right in their faces shouting at them to hold their fire. He blinked several times; his words were catching in his throat. "_Hiccup?_"

"Yeah Dad its me."

"What have they done to you? They'll pay, all them will pay for turning you into this...this monstrosity. Your humanity will be avenged."

"Dad, stop for a minute and listen. I'm still human, the ritual was interrupted. Healer Skerry can still remove Arkin's blood. I can be myself again," Hiccup tried to reason with him. "You and Thornado are both injured; you need to see a healer. Please, land so Gobber and Healer Skerry can take a look at you."

"I'm sorry son, but I can't forgive them for what they've done to you. I was in anguish when you were kidnapped and now I might be too late to save you. I have to win this fight so you can return to Berk!" Stoick shouted kicking his dragon. Hiccup barely managed to dodge as his dad whipped past them.

Queen Rayna had finally gotten rid of the pests when she saw a youth in a half dragon state fly up to her. She smiled at the sight. "_Your dragon form though incomplete is magnificent Hiccup. I can't wait to see what you look like once you finish manifesting._"

"Queen Rayna, please listen to me. You've treated me like your own child and taught me so much during my stay here. I don't want to see you die. If you would just yield this challenge and let Healer Skerry check you over, I know we could come up with a solution to this problem."

_ "I apologize my child, but I can't yield this fight. Too much is at stake. I hope you can forgive me for what I'm about to do," _Queen Rayna apologized whipping past him.

Hiccup watched in horror as his everyone prepared to unleash their most powerful attacks on one another forcing an end to this

confrontation. If they all hit the backlash would send them all crashing into the ground. Determined not to let that happen he and Toothless flew until they were dead center between the fighting. They hover in the air daring them to open fire. The attackers tried to stop, but it was to late as they unleashed their full powers at the duo.

"Hiccup get out the way now!" Astrid screamed, but her boyfriend was frozen unable to move and Toothless couldn't get into a position under his rider to take him away. They were both going to die.

Seconds before the attacks collided Hiccup and Toothless found themselves encased in magical sphere which dragged them out of the way as Nissa quickly took their place. She unleashed all her power forming a barrier of fire and light around her. The attacks hit her with full force as she strained to keep the attacks at bay. She let out a scream of agony. With a burst of dazzling lights the attacks vanished. The onlookers watched in horror as Nissa, now in a half human/dragon state hurled down towards the sky unconscious to certain death.

7. Blood Power

"_NISSA!" Hiccup screamed his friend's name hoping she wake up, but she continued to fall from the sky at an alarming rate. Hiccup angled his body downward flying as fast as he could trying to catch up with his friend. She was just out of his reach when he folded his wings to his body knowing he drop like a stone. As he got closer he spread his wings wide catching the air and with a desperate grab snagged the girl's arm. He strained with all his muscles trying to pull her back up and stay in the air.

Unfortunately his wings weren't strong enough to hold them both aloft. They both started falling towards the ground again. Hiccup got turned upside down and couldn't get himself righted. "Oh man I didn't think this through! Heeeeeeeeelllllllllllllllllllll
lllllllllllllpppppppppppppppppp !"

"Hiccup! He's falling to fast for us to catch up! They're going to splatter all over the ground!" Astrid shouted. Everyone was diving after them, but the wind resistance kept pushing them backwards and their injuries slowed them down. None of them would get there in time to prevent their friends demise.

The roar of a Nightfury filled the air as a black blur speeded past them aiming for the falling half dragon teens. Toothless angled under Hiccup who appeared to crawl through the air until he was on the saddle. Opening the tail fin he controlled their descent snagging his friend in Toothless's claws. They were still falling as both rider and dragon strained their wings hoping to slow down.

_ "She's dead weight! Our momentum is pulling us towards the ground faster then we can slow us down. We're going to crash!" _Toothless informed his rider.

"Don't give up buddy we can do this," Hiccup encouraged as he flapped as hard as he could. He was refusing to give up. Suddenly the three of them felt their fall slow down and stop. He looked around in

amazement as his fellow riders surrounded him each helping by grabbing the Nightfury and the girl. The extra wings helped control their descent as they all landed safely on the floor of the solaria.

Hiccup quickly dismounted Toothless and knelt down beside Nissa. He heard his dad land and saw Queen Rayna stumble to ground as she returned to her human form. Valma rushed over whistling for the palanquin bearers. Valma forced her queen onto the palanquin threatening to restrain her if she didn't sit down right this instant and let Valma check her over. While the nurse started injecting a new round of blood serum Gobber came over to help out Stoick while Healer Skerry yelled at the remaining servants to get the vets on the island back here to treat Thornado. Once he was sure his orders were obeyed he hurried to the fallen princess's side to start examining her.

Nissa's eyes fluttered weakly open looking at Hiccup.
"Did...we...stop... the fight?"

"Yeah, the challenge is over. You aunt is being looked over and my dad will be fine. Why did you do that? Why did you let yourself take my place? You could die and..."

"Hiccup, you know why...cough cough...I had...to...do it. Arkin said himself. 'I gladly...sacrifice everything...including my gaugh...life...to spend time with someone I love...or...cough...keep them safe.' I couldn't let you die not when so many people are counting on you. As long as your safe and can be returned...to normal... then I know everything will be alright," Nissa whispered before falling unconscious once more.

"Nissa? Nissa wake up, Nissa!" Hiccup shouted frantically before Toothless pulled him off the girl. Healer Skerry pulled out a crystal rod from his robe and started waving it over the girl. Frowning at the results he looked up at the teen with sadness in his eyes. The news wasn't good.

"Healer Skerry, can you help her please?" Hiccup pleaded.

"I'm not sure there's anything I can do; she's gravely ill."

"Skerry, please what is the condition of my niece's health? I can feel her inner dragon growing weaker by the second. My (yes Valma I'll stay lying down and rest in a minute), bond with her is starting to unravel," Queen Rayna whispered. Valma had already bandaged her wounds after disinfecting them, but the nurse was quite vocal in ordering her queen to lie down and not move on the bed. The palanquin bearers moved the bed closer as Nissa was carefully moved onto a liter. The queen hesitantly stroked her niece's face tears streaming down her face. "Oh Ola and Ragnar, can you forgive me for my bitterness and foolishness. I was so lost after loosing so many close to us that I pushed away the only family I had. Why didn't I listen to your pleadings until now? Why did it have to come to this to make me see the truth?"

"My Queen you need to refrain from any unnecessary movements. Your body has been greatly taxed beyond its limits. You need at least a week of bed rest and the proper medicines to regain your strength.

Using magic and light powers at night puts major stress on your body. You're extremely lucky you didn't have a stroke or go into shock. I gave you another dose of the blood serum, but it will take time to regenerate your blood especially after losing so much of it!"

"I understand and I will take it easy, but please I need to know about my niece's health. What are her chances for a full recovery?" Rayna demanded. Though injured and weak she was still the leader of Xanadu. Since the fighting had stopped the island was no longer in danger of being ripped apart by her madness. She telepathically commanded the Honor Guard to help return the citizens to their homes and keep using their connection to monitor the health of the people and the island before returning to her side.

"Its not looking good, her lungs are bruised, one has partially collapsed. Her spleen is in danger of rupturing if not taken care of quickly. She's got deep gashes to her extremities and unless I can find someway to stop the internal bleeding she'll be dead within the hour. She needs surgery except..."

"Except what? We've all seen how advance your medical knowledge is. If you have a way to save her why not do it?" Astrid demanded.

"Its not that simple; to even attempt to perform the surgery I need a massive amount of blood to transfuse into her to keep her vitals from crashing!"

"So take someone's blood and do it already. We've all got plenty to spare!" Ruffnut pointed out.

"It's not that simple child. There are certain factors in everyone's blood that makes them different then other people. If you give someone the wrong type of blood they'll go into system failure," Valma tried to explain to the Vikings. "Normally we'd try to use blood from a relative, but Nissa's parents blood was poisoned by the weapons that killed them, Aksel wasn't a match and Queen Rayna has already given to much today. There's simply no compatible blood left on the island."

"Yes there is, what about me?"

"Hiccup, you can't be serious. You're..."

"I know Dad, but hear me out. I was selected because I was compatible with Arkin's blood and Arkin was Nissa's cousin. You said that you could filter out Arkin's blood so my old human one could take over. Can't you just filter it out and put it in Nissa?"

"Even if I could the ratio between Arkin's and your blood is unbalanced. At the rate needed to filter, purify and transfuse would be faster then your human blood could regenerate; even more so because without Arkin's blood your new leg would decay because of how fast we'd be removing the blood. There's almost no chance to save it or give it back after the transfusion and we'd have to do a simultaneous reattachment of a prosthetic while helping Nissa out. Even with the blood serum I don't think it would be possible for you to donate Hiccup."

"There has to be something you can do, you can't just let her die. Can't you use one of the dragons blood to help make up the

difference? You are part dragon right oh that hurt," Stoick stated. His chest wounds were starting to open again as Gobber hurriedly tried to stitch them up.

Healer Skerry pondered his words for a few minutes weighing the pros and cons of such an endeavor. "It could work, if we filter out your human proteins and mix Arkin's blood with a compatible dragon the ratio of transfusion wouldn't have to be as fast, but we need to act quickly to see if any of your dragons are a match."

"I'm a match," _a voice spoke up. Everyone turned to look at Toothless in disbelief. The natural foe of the Daypeace was a match for their princess? It couldn't be possible! _"I smelled it when I tasted her blood. I'm the only one here with the right kind of blood to help Nissa. I understand there are risks to donating blood and that I could possibly get a serious infection, possibly lose more of my tail or die, but I'm willing to take that risk if it helps my best friends survive."_

_ "We'd like to help out anyway we can. Is there something us and the riders can do?" _ Stormfly insisted.

"Yes, there is. Stormfly and Hookfang, take your riders up to the hot springs and fill as many barrels with the water as you can then bring it back here. The minerals in the water will help speed up our patients recovery. Meatlug and Fishlegs, I need you to go into the forests and get these plants for me so Apothecary Kora can mix up a new batch of painkillers and antibiotics. Belch and Barf, take your riders to the market to gather as much food and drink as you can carry. The donors will need as much as you can provide to help them recover after the transfusion. Gobber, once you've finished patching up Stoick and checking out Thornado head down to the forges. The smiths there will help you fashion a new prosthetic for Hiccup, we'll need it as soon as possible. Valma, take Queen Rayna back to her quarters and tend to her. Once you're done please join me in the infirmary. Servants hop to it, I'll need your help carrying my patients to the infirmary. Let's move people we don't have a lot of time."

Hiccup got ready to leave, when Stoick grabbed his son and pulled him into a hug. "I know you have to do this son, I would do the same if it meant saving your life. Its just..."

"I know Dad, I promise I'll make it out of this alive and my old self again. You just concentrate on healing up. You'll be no use to Berk if you're spilling your guts every time you move. I love you Dad."

"I know son, I know," Stoick said releasing Hiccup who hurried out the room with Toothless. Stoick watched them go wondering if it would be the last time he'd see his son. Two of the regular guard approached the man. "Yes, what is it?"

"We've been order to take you the guest wing so you may recover in comfort. A medic will meet us there to help finish dressing your wounds," the guard explained.

"If its all the same to you I'd rather not relax while my son and dragon are sick."

"Stoick, don't make me hit you upside the head. Thornado is being looked after by the best vets on the island and will be okay once he has that mineral bath. You could use one two by the looks of those gashes," Gobber told his friend. "Look, I understand that your fear, but right now you need to stop being so stubborn and get some rest. You'll be no good to Hiccup if you die because you refused to get your wounds looked at."

_ "I'll be fine Stoick, the vets will move me closer to your room once they've finished tending to me. This isn't the first time I've had my jaw smashed and it won't be the last. Go on rest, I'll join you shortly," _Thornado pleaded. Succumbing to his dragon's pleading the Viking chief was escorted to his rooms to recover while the vets, who just entered the solaria, began to work on their new patient.

Meanwhile the Viking teens were carrying out their assignments as efficiently as possible. Astrid and Stormfly flew back to the royal hot springs dunking two large barrels into the springs. The smell was causing her nose to wrinkle, but she managed to block it out. "Okay girl that's as much as we can carry, come on we have to get this back to the palace pronto."

_ "That outdoor bath isn't going to fill itself!" _Stormfly agreed as they turned around. As they flew back to the palace to drop off their load they passed Hookfang and Snotlout going out for more. The duo seemed to be working in perfect sync. _ "So Hookfang going to start listening to your rider more often?" _

_ "Ha, ha Stormfly your so funny. I've just decided I like this smarter less obnoxious version of my rider is all. It's easier to get along with someone who treats you with respect then yells at you all the time." _

"Hey, I was only yelling at you because I cared buddy! Okay okay no need to get rough! We need to get more water buddy. I promise once we're done with this you'll get the biggest fish banquet of your life," Snotlout promised. "You better hurry, by the looks of their resavour they'll need as much water as we can carry."

"Understood, just keep up the good work!"

Meanwhile Fishlegs and Meatlug had been joined by Steinir and Ula to search the forest for the plants needed to make the medicine. Steinir was stripping the bark from a nearby tree while Ula was searching for a few animals to donate some saliva for add measures. Meatlug and Fishlegs were over turning rocks searching for moss to use. "Okay moss grows on the north side of trees and rocks. The particular moss we need is teal that glows under natural light. Meatlug can you give me some more light girl?"

"_Let me just eat this boulder. Hmm crunchy ah one natural lantern at your service! I smell the wildflowers we need. Should I go get them?"

—
"Go ahead, I'll keep looking for the moss. Oh if you find that long sweet grass bring it with you okay? Steinir, have you finished harvesting the bark yet?"

"Yes and I also got the leaves we needed. This should be enough to

help make the painkillers. Ula, did you finish getting the saliva from the local wildlife?"

"Ugh, remind me again why I agreed to do this when I hate trying to catch wildlife? Ugh, these scratches better be worth it. Have you found the moss yet? We need to get it back to the Apothecary Kora so she can create the medicine. I can already smell her boiling the sea urchins from here."

"Got the moss! Meatlug hurry up girl we need to finish finding the rest of the items on the list!"

"I got the flowers and grass. Also picked up some vines that could be of use. Hop on already. Let's hope the Twins and their Zippleback are stuffing their faces instead of gathering food."

The Twins were trying their best not eat the food they were collecting. Normally they would shy away from eating fruits and vegetables claiming they weren't fit for Vikings yet their own hunger won out. Ruffnut was enjoying the spicy flavor of her pepper while her brother munched on a pomegranate fruit. "This stuff is so hot my mouth feels like its on fire, but I don't care!"

"Yeah this is some juicy fruit. Yum, I wonder what else we should try?"

"You can eat more delectable after we've delivered it to the chefs. This food is going to go a long way into helping your friends recover from their injuries," Belch informed the twins.

"Not that I blame you for sampling the food. The fish here are so tasty! I've never had such a satisfy meal burrrrrrrrrrrpppppppp! Sorry about that," Barf apologized. It seemed he'd been snacking on the job as well earning a laugh from the twins.

"Alright enough joking around, we need to do the job assigned to us. We can goof off later. Start filling your bag with as much healthy stuff as you can," Ruffnut commanded, lightly tapping her twin on his head.

"Hey, I'm going no need to get violent," Tuffnut responded. They started to gather as much food as they could possibly carry. Once they had several bags full of plant and meat they headed back to the palace where they met up with Davin and Kariat. The Honor Guard members escorted them to the kitchens where they all started to prepare the meal. The chefs had already started making what they called smoothies for the patients. They all tried to keep their thoughts from wondering about the health of their friends.

In the infirmary the patients were all on different tables, well Toothless was on a raised cozy mat. Valma had used a large needle to pierce the Nightfury's tough scaly hide near the base of his tail to get an adequate blood supply. Toothless was instructed not to move much. The mineral water collected from the hot springs was being pumped into the room where it gathered in a basin. The water was then pumped through a small pipe into several bags hanging on hooks before being injected into the donors bodies. Skerry had also used the purified hot spring waters to cleanse his instruments.

Toothless glanced over towards the other side of the room where

Hiccup was. He gave a gentle purr hoping to ease the boy's tension as the assistant medics finished attaching the lines to filter out Arkin's blood. Hiccup was watching the process with wonder in his eyes followed the lines where the blood went through several vials before mixing with a purification agent in one beaker then gradually mixed together with Toothless's blood before entering into Nissa's body. Hiccup was also getting fluids from the hot spring to keep his vitals steady. Once Apothecary Kora finished mixing the medicines a medic would start giving him those to ease his discomfort. "Its okay, bud I'm fine really. I just feel a bit woozy."

"I'm going to give you a sedative to help you sleep," a medic explained as she prepared the shot. "Once your under we'll be able to start filtering out Prince Arkin's blood at a slightly faster rate. At some point during the transfusion we'll have to start amputating the remainder of your new leg and replacing it with your new prosthetic. Your friend Gobber should be here within the hour to help with that part. When you wake up you'll be in a lot of pain, but you should be fine as long as you take it easy okay?"

"I understand, just make sure nothing happens to Nissa," Hiccup told her glancing over at his friend. Healer Skerry and Valma were finishing setting up to operate her around gowning up and counting instruments. A medic entered the room carrying several vials of freshly made medicines as another was getting ready to monitor the crystals to keep track of the vitals. Nissa had been stripped of her clothing being placed in a hospital gown. He said a silent prayer to Eir, Goddess of Healing, to watch over his friends. He felt a prick in his arm and soon was sleeping with ease along with Toothless.

"Alright let's get to work everyone. We don't have a lot of time if we want to save the princess's life. Maya, keep an eye on the patients' vitals. Hector; monitor the rate of flow and mix of the transfusion. Phobei you're in charge of managing the meds. Lyra and Bellos you'll be assisting me during the surgery. Tell Jason to be on stand by for the reattachment part of the surgery. Alright people everyone gowned up and sterile? Then let's get started."

The surgery got underway as Skerry made the first incision. He first had to stem the internal bleeding using a small probe heated by his own fire. There were several leaking vessels and it took awhile to identify all of them, then he had to double check to make sure he hadn't missed any. Then he set to work repairing her damaged lungs re-inflating the partial collapse before going to work on the spleen. As he worked Valma assisted him giving him the instruments or helping with the repairs. Lyra and Bellos helped suture the gashes on Nissa's arms and legs. Maya had her hands full as she kept the healers up to date on the patient's vitals warning them if there was any drop. Hector made sure that the blood ratio was at a steady speed and ensure the lines didn't get tangled. Phobei had just finished giving some pain medicine when Jason entered the room with Gobber who looked funny all gowned up.

"I've got the new leg and she's a beauty. You're craftsmanship is absolutely brilliant. I never could have created such a realistic limb back on Berk," Gobber chuckled looking down at the prosthetic. The Daypeaces were skilled metal workers creating sturdy metal that could also bend like a real limb. The foot itself had more mobility then the old hook and it was covered in a tan scaled hide to give a

more realistic look. All in all it would be a better fit for Hiccup.

"You can admire the craftsmanship later; there is little time to dawdle. With Arkin's blood being filtered out Hiccup's leg is already starting to necrosis. We need to remove the limb quickly to prevent infection and save as much viable tissue as we can. I hope your skills as a blacksmith serve you well. This isn't going to be pleasant experience for any of us," Jason commented. The two of them quickly went to work on the young Viking as they removed a few inches below his knee. They had to rush to stem the bleeding and the poor boy nearly woke up from the pain before they got the situation under control. They worked fast to attach the new prosthetic and check its function.

The entire operation took the better part of the night to complete. There were no complications, but each of the three had their own set of problems during the procedure. Finally the three of them could be transferred to recovery where they would be monitored for any complications. Healer Skerry had given each of them a massive amount of precautionary antibiotics. As soon as they were settled in their room he made sure they had plenty of fluids and the food was waiting for the donors when they woke up. After cleaning up he delivered the news to the anxious parties explaining they had made it through surgery, but it would be touch and go for awhile with Nissa. Meanwhile Toothless and Hiccup would have to remain isolated for a day or two to prevent infection.

It was a long agonizing night for everyone. Queen Rayna requested hourly updates on the condition of her niece and at one point Valma had to insist she get some rest or she would be forced to knock her out. Stoick wasn't much more cooperative either. He kept wanting to get up and go visit his son and was forced back down in bed with warnings that he could pull his stitches out if he kept this up. It was Thornado, who injuries had been treated and was sporting a mesh of some kind for his partially broken jaw, that convinced his rider to follow the doctors orders.

Meanwhile the teens and their dragons were sitting together in their guest quarters talking amongst one another. "Do you think they'll be okay? Nissa was really injured. Not even Gothi could have helped her at this point," Ruffnut asked.

"Yeah, well they did seem to be a bit more knowledgeable when it came to things like medicine. They regrew an entire leg from just blood, how amazing is that? To bad Hiccup's going to lose his leg again. I'm sure he'll miss being normal again," Tuffnut replied.

"When was Hiccup ever normal? Did you see him with those scales and wings? He was a freak oh sorry Astrid I was just trying to lighten the mood is all. I'm concerned about all of them as well. You know these Daypeaces aren't so bad when they're not trying to kidnap people. Those Honor Guard members are really amazing with the way they fight."

"I wonder if it would be possible to establish a working relationship with them. It would be great if we could have an exchange of knowledge and trade with them, but considering the distance and their actions that might not be possible. Still if we could form a relationship with our natural enemies maybe we can do it again right

Astrid? Astrid you okay?"

"Oh sorry Fishlegs I wasn't paying attention. I guess I'm just anxious. I'm so used to be strong and in control of most of my life, but right now there's nothing I can do except be patient and wait. That's not the easiest thing to do. What about you Stormfly? Are you guys worried about Toothless as well?"

_ "Toothless is strong even stronger than most Nightfuries. If he could take losing a tail fin only to come back stronger than ever then he can handle losing some blood." _

_ "He's going to be just fine we all know it. Being separated from the rest of us is hard, but if it helps make sure he's going to be fine then we just have to accept it." _

_ "Meatlug's right, there's nothing more that we can do right now except pray that it will all work out in the end. For now I think we all should get some rest and see what happens in the morning okay?"

-

_ "We agree with Hookfang, it's been a long night and we all could use some shut eye. See you in the morning." _ With that everyone turned in for the night hoping tomorrow would be better.

It was mid afternoon the next day when Healer Skerry delivered the news that the three patients would make a full recovery and that they could receive visitors in a day or two. Nissa was still unconscious for now, but the support the island was helping her heal at a remarkable rate. He also checked on the two leaders making sure their injuries hadn't gotten any worse. He told Stoick that his stitches were holding and gave him some antibiotics telling him to take two every few hours to prevent infection. He'd be able to remove the stitches in a week or so. He also told him that if he tried to get up and visit his son before he gave the okay he'd mist him for a week.

Next he visited the Queen. He was pleased to see her following his orders. Her wounds had closed up nicely and her blood was replenishing itself at a good rate. Her connection with Xanadu had been reestablished and he was proud to say her mind was healing well. "Your energy levels are coming back up and your wounds are healing nicely. Your body seems to be recovering from the strain of using magic at night. I've tested the strength of your bonds; I'm happy to report they're strong as ever. As for your mental status, forgive me my Queen, but I'm just glad that you're finally dealing with your grief in an appropriate manner."

"You're forgiven Skerry; I haven't been dealing with my grief appropriately. I held onto my hurt and anger for so long I never thought about how damaging it could be to my health. I loved my family so much and whenever I looked at Nissa all I could see and hear was the rest of my family. How much they loved her and encouraged her, that she was so much like them. Nissa always tried to help me, but I couldn't accept it, because accepting it would mean I would be acknowledging that my sister was truly gone, that I could never regain a part of my son. How could I have threatened her by taking away her inner dragon? How did I fall so far to order a kidnapping and trying to force someone to become what they aren't? I don't deserve either Nissa's or Hiccup's forgiveness," Queen Rayna

whispered sadly. She had tears on her face and looked so miserable.

"My Queen; we all make mistakes especially when they're grieving. Everyone on Xanadu was heartbroken about the loss of your family and members of the Honor Guard. Your heart was the one that stayed broken the longest. Nissa was trying so hard to help you that she didn't grieve herself for the longest time. Her own sadness held her back from unlocking her full potential, but I truly believe that with Hiccup's help she'll shine brightly. From my observations it seems she's already coming into her new found abilities."

"Yes, I noticed them myself. She's stronger then I ever gave her credit for. When she wakes up the two of us are going to have a long talk. Its time for us to bond as a family, but first I need to do something else. Skerry, when can I get out of bed? I need to talk to Stoick."

"My Queen you know you need rest. I really think you should; alright if you promise to take it easy for the rest of the day I'll allow you to use a wheelchair to visit Stoick tomorrow, but after that you need to rest a bit longer. You won't be able to help anyone if you don't take care of yourself okay?"

"Thank you my old friend." For the rest of the day she rested contemplating what she was going to say when she saw the chief. The day passed by with everyone still on edge. It was frustrating that everyone wanted to be close to one another, but knowing they couldn't was the hardest thing ever. Hiccup wrote some notes that the medics gave to his friends to let him know they were okay and the dragons were able to communicate over distances that everything was fine.

The next day Stoick finally got to see his son for the first time in two days. Hiccup was resting upright in his bed comfortably eating the platter of food set out for him. The boy would be allowed to get out of bed and move around tomorrow while being released after a few more days of observations to ensure that his transition back to fully human was a success. Though he no longer resembled a half human/dragon hybrid there were a few lingering effects. He still sported the lavender highlights in his hair and he retained a bit of the muscular frame he'd built up. His senses while dulled were still sharper then before. Otherwise he was a perfectly normal human.

"My boy, I can't tell you how relieved I am to see you looking so well. I was so worried about you," Stoick said hugging his son. "I was so afraid I was going to lose you."

"I was worried about you and Thornado as well. You both sustained some serious injuries. I was worried you two would get a serious affection. Having you gut clawed open like that can be a good way to die."

"It takes more then a few scratches from a dragons claw to kill a Viking you know that son. Thornado's been through rougher fights then that one he'll be okay. Glad to see your not sporting wings yourself anymore, but that hair is going to take some time to get use to," Stoick joked ruffling his son's head playfully before he looked down at his new prosthetic. He frowned a bit before asking a question. "I'm sorry that you lost your new leg and had to go back to a

prosthetic. Do you have any regrets about your decision?"

"No Dad, as much as I would have liked to keep the new leg knowing that Nissa's alive is a much more rewarding gift. I always secretly wished she was real and it turns out she is. Having this chance to get to know her and see her world was amazing despite almost being turned into a human/dragon hybrid. The Draconia Daypeaces and the island of Xanadu have so many marvels to share with the world. This place reminds me a lot of Berk, everyone working together to build a better life. We could learn so much from them and they could learn so much from us," Hiccup declared excitedly. A wave of dizziness forced him to lie back down.

"I don't know if that's such a good idea son. I admit that I've come to trust your friend but how can I forgive an entire island for what they did to you? I almost lost you forever to that queen. She stole from us and insulted my reputation. She was willing to keep us prisoners forever and exile her niece for standing up for what's right. How do I relate to that?"

"Dad, Rayna isn't that much different than you. She wants what's best for all her people. Yeah she did a terrible thing however everyone does crazy stuff when they're grieving. She's an amazing woman Dad. She's an artist, linguist, and she loves learning new things. She's protective, determined, and you've seen how well she fights. She's a good person Dad and I respect her a lot. You need to talk with her, forgive her. If you don't she might never be able to forgive herself and help form an everlasting bond with Nissa. For my sake will you please talk with her?"

"Alright for you sake son I'll talk to her. I have to go now, that Healer is barely letting me out a bed and Gobber seems to be taking orders from him now instead of me. I'll tell your friends they can come see you later."

"Could you also check on Toothless for me. Skerry mentioned he was going to be released tomorrow and I want to make sure nothing goes wrong."

"Alright son, I will. You just take it easy okay."

Thornado was just finishing up a visit with Toothless at that exact moment. The Thunderdrome's speech was partially slurred in part to his meshed jaw, but he could still talk pretty well. "How are you feellinyyyyyng afterrrr being used asss a blood source?"

"I'm doing much better, the medics here have been taking care of me. I really don't feel that drained at all. I actually feel very proud of the role I played in helping Nissa out. How are you feeling? That mesh looks painful."

"It's not that baddd. I actually feel fine. The rest of our groupppppp is waiting anxiouslyyyyy to learn what's going to happen next."

"That's up to Stoick and Rayna. Hiccup and Nissa want them to be friends, but I don't know if that's possible."

"Stranger things have happened just look at what we accomplished getting here. You formed a bond with your natural opposite. I think

those two can get along. In fact I bet they're talking about it right now." —

Well it was true they both were together, but they weren't talking. Gobber and Stoick had been discussing their plans for returning home when Queen Rayna entered being wheeled by Valma. She looked at the men anxiously steadyng her trembling limbs. Valma whispered encouragements into her ear. Finally taking a deep breaths she started to talk. "Forgive the intrusion, but I needed to speak with you Stoick."

"I have nothing to say to you nor do I wish to hear what you have to say."

"Please, I need to get somethings out in the open, to explain my actions and..."

"I would like you to leave me alone right now."

"Stoick, I know your angry, but I think you should listen to her," Gobber told his friend. He held up his mental hand to block any protests. "She came to see you even though she's weak and should be resting. Whatever she has to say is more important to her then her health. Your son asked you to talk to her and I agree you need to hear her motives. Please humor me."

"Thank you Gobber. Where do I begin? I know that you understand what its like to lose friends and family. Hiccup told me about what happened to Val. You must have felt like a piece of your sole was ripped out. Our Dragon Hearts are one of most precious gifts from Helios at the same time they can be a curse. I was linked to my family and friends. I experienced my family's deaths, felt their lives flicker out. It shatter my mind, I was so lost and alone that I refused to let anyone help me. Nissa was trying so hard, but it was just to much to soon. I just had lost so much that I couldn't let go. I felt I would be betraying Aksel and Arkin's memory if I accept my niece's bond, that I had to admit they were gone forever."

"I nearly died did you know that? Nissa had been working to bring out her powers when I suffered a stroke. I could have died, but the power of my people brought me back. After that I couldn't or wouldn't wait for my niece to help me out. I know she was trying her best and if I had believed in her instead of belittling her maybe we could have formed a true family bond. I just wanted a piece of my family back so badly, that's why I started looking for compatible matches to my son's blood. I knew all the possible candidates, Nissa's records on Hiccup was meticulous. He was such an extraordinary person and I thought that he'd welcome a chance to come to a place where he'd find a home. I should have listened when Nissa told me things were changed, I was just to stubborn and desperate that I refused to listen."

"You should know that I always treated your son well here. I never did anything except restrict his movements. We'd spent a great deal of time together. These past few weeks I saw so much through Hiccup's eyes that I had forgotten about. The joy of pure amazement at the world. The happiness of creating something new. The love of a child who I had come to care about and his own way saw me as some type of mother figure, not that I could take Val's place. The thought of losing him was to much which is why I reacted the way I did. But

after seeing my niece riding a Nightfury and Hiccup helping her I realize how wrong I was about everything. You've made several mistakes, some of them the same as mine. What's never been in doubt was how much you love your son. I am truly sorry for what pain and mental anguish I've put you through. I did the same thing with Nissa and I hope that she'll forgive me for what I have put her through. I don't expect you to forgive me, I don't deserve it. I can only hope that one day in the distant future you'll understand."

"Before your speech I might have just ignored what you had to say. I was truly angry about what you ordered. I was furious with your actions and didn't like your low opinion of me. If we weren't so far away from Berk I probably bring a fleet and ravage your island. Instead so many people have stood up to defend you. My son, your niece, the dragons. All your people believe in you and think that the two of us could become friends, that our two worlds could share with one another. I don't know if that's possible and I'm reluctant to try. Still I know the power of forgiveness and learning from ones mistakes. I accept your apology Queen Rayna Skandi and forgive you for what you did."

"Then I ask Stoick the Vast Haddock; Chief of Berk's Hairy Hooligan Clan, if he is willing to form a treaty of peace with the Draconia Daypeaces of Xanadu. For I do believe its possible for our two worlds to come together. If your willing to work for a peaceful future then so am I." The two leaders shook hands promising to work on an agreement to be completed by the time the Vikings would set sail for home next week.

8. Bound for Home

The sun had just started to rise as the Vikings gathered around their ship preparing to cast off for Berk. After three days of negotiations the treaty between the two lands had been finalized. The Daypeaces would be happy to offer trade and share knowledge with their northern neighbors, even offering aid if necessary via use of the Gateways. The Vikings in turn would keep the secret of the Gateways while also trading in weapons and armor along with some of the northern delicacies. If needed the Vikings would also offer aid to their new friends. There were other agreements such as allowing representatives of the two parties access to the others home, joint expeditions etc. Hopefully the two cultures would influence one another in positive ways.

"Gobber make sure we have enough supplies to last the return trip. Snotlout check the sail, Ruffnut and Tuffnut take stock of our weapon, Fishlegs make sure the raft doesn't have any leaks in it. Astrid finish reinforcing the hull. Hiccup make sure the dragons needs are taken care of. I want to be sailing within the hour. We've been away from Berk far longer than I wanted to be. I can only imagine what Spitelout has done to the island in my absence," Stoick shouted commands at the group.

"Dad, I'm sure that Berk will be just fine when we get home. Remember we have stubbornness issues. Nothing short of the gods fury could make us leave."

"I know son, I'm just anxious to be back home. The warmth here is too much for my taste."

"It doesn't help much that our clothing is too heavy for this kind of climate," Gobber added helpfully. "All the stores are stocked with enough provisions to last us the trip. I added an extra barrel of fresh water just in case."

"The ship and the raft are secure sir. Weapons have been restocked. We can sail as soon as you give the word," Astrid informed him.

"We're ready to go as well. We'll fly part of the way and then when we get to the Gateway ride on the raft," _ Toothless spoke up. The experience had left all of them able to perfectly communicate with one another in Dragonese. It was a huge step forward in deepening the bonds between human and dragon.

"Heads up everyone, the far well party has arrived and it looks like they bring gifts a plenty for all of us!" _Thornado shouted. Everyone turned to see Queen Rayna and Nissa, accompanied by Healer Skerry and the Honor Guard, walking across the sands towards them. The Honor Guard members were carrying bundles in their arms. Nissa was wearing a more regal Xanadu inspired outfit similar to her aunt's only in her color scheme. She carried herself with a lot more confidence and joy than before.

The two groups stood apart for a few minutes before Queen Rayna bowed to them. "I see that your preparations for your journey home is complete. The tide is in so you should be leaving soon if you want to reach the Gateway by afternoon. I've asked a few of my Honor Guard to escort you there. With their power and knowledge they should be able to land you back in your own waters with just one jump. You should reach Berk in two or three days. I'm sure they are eagerly awaiting your return so they can celebrate. I'm sure you'll have a few new songs to add to your repertoire when our first trading party arrives in six months time."

"Thank you for the assistance of your people. Even with the knowledge granted to us by Nissa I doubt we'd be able to operate the Gateways as effectively as you. The island will look forward to your trading party. I'll have commissioned suitable armor for the different climates by then."

"Excellent. Though we seek peace it never hurts to be prepared for battle as we have learned. I have come bearing gifts to give you to make up for our initial impression. I hope that you are able to use them."

"Ah cool! What do you have for us? I hope its something cool!" Tuffnut yelled. Ruffnut hit him on the head giving him a look. He was about to hit her back when a glare from Stoick made them both quit.

The Daypeaces chuckled at their antics. "There's no need for violence right now young Twins. I'm sure you'll get plenty of action once you return home. As for gifts; here is our first one," Ula said opening her small box. Inside, packed in some kind of protection, was beautiful colored glass. The sun sparkled off them in a ray of blues, reds, and yellow. Closing the box she handed it to Gobber. "This is the special glass we make here on the island. You won't find anything like it in the world. Its not enough for the whole island though I'm

sure you could find somewhere special to put it."

"Thank you, my these are beautiful. I think we'll put them somewhere in the square so everyone can see their beauty."

"Our next gift is for the young riders. We hope these new saddles and riding clothes will make you more comfortable as you fly. The saddles have been treated to last in the harshest weather and the clothes are lined with an extra layer of fluff for added warmth," Steinar explained as he and the rest of the male members handed out the items.

"Whoa this is so soft and look it stretches!"

"I can't wait to test out this saddle. Hookfang and I will be flying circles around all of you."

"This is definitely a cool gift. Thank you so much!"

"You're very welcome indeed. We only have a few more gifts to hand out. We know its not much, but these medicines and designs for structures for dragons will go a long way into making sure your relationships on Berk last for a long time," Katriat explained as the rest of the females handed out the gifts.

Healer Skerry handed a satchel bursting with meds and instructions written in runes to Hiccup. "Be sure to give these to Gothi. I'm sure she can make great use of them, perhaps even improve upon them."

"Thanks. I'll make sure she reads the instructions. You know how Vikings aren't very big on reading."

"This last gift is for you Hiccup. I like you to have this," Nissa told him handing him a magical opal mirror. "Our bond is strong so and this will only strengthen it. I have the other one so we'll be able communicate face to face over long distances. Your dad can also use it to talk to my aunt to discuss business." She handed him the mirror and when their fingers touched they both blushed. Though they would never be intimate with one another, their strong deep personal connection could be felt with all.

"Thank you Hiccup for everything you have done for me and my people. Xanadu will prosper once more because you showed us the strength of ones will. I only hope I can live up to the example that you've set and become a great leader like you."

"I'm sure you'll do fine Nissa. You have more potential to be a leader then you realize," Hiccup said. Suddenly on an impulse he hugged her with all his might and she returned the embrace. "You are going to do just fine as long as you keep believing in yourself. This is your moment don't waste it."

"I won't, I promise to always do what is right and give the people of Xanadu my best. I'm no longer going to hold back for fear of failure. I'll always treasure the friendship and kindness all of you have given me. I will never forget it."

"I made this for you using the art supplies in the palace. I know its not much but I didn't want to leave without giving you a gift,"

Hiccup said handing her a small painting. It was a beautiful mini portrait of the two of them laughing as they stood on the beaches of Xanadu. Seeing Nissa's tears of joy he knew he made the right choice.

"We also have a gift for the people of Xanadu. We know how much the Daypeaces love adding manuscripts to your library so..." Fishlegs started to explain as he pulled a small notebook when Snotlout interrupted him.

"We've written down all our greatest legends and songs for your personal enjoyment. Some of my more heroic tales are included. I'm sure the kids here will love to read about the stories of the greatest Vikings who ever lived."

"We appreciate your gift. This tome will be added to the library at once," Queen Rayna replied as she accepted the gift. Nissa hugged the teens whispering her goodbyes as they responded in kind.

There were a few more gifts to be given. Gobber had made Nissa a new mace to use and Stoick gave her an extra Viking helmet. The dragons offered bits of their scales for different uses. All the Daypeaces said their goodbyes to the dragons in their own special way and Nissa hugged Toothless for a long time thanking him for everything. Toothless crooned to her saying how much he'd miss her and that he hoped that she would visit soon. After a few more tearful goodbyes Steinir and Ula manifested into their dragon forms and started leading the Viking party home.

They had been sailing for an about two hours covering a vast distance because all the dragons were pulling the ship on cables. "At the rate we're going we should make it to the Gateway by late afternoon. Hopefully there will be enough sunlight for our friends to send us straight home. I don't know about all of you, but I'm ready to get back to my forge. Plus I'm sure Phil is missing me tons."

"Yeah your sheep seemed so loyal to you when he trapped us that one time while the Bone Knapper attacked."

"I can't wait to get back and update the Book of Dragons with all the information about the Daypeaces. I can just picture how long the chapter will be although maybe I should hold back on mentioning their hybrid nature. After battling those poachers keeping some secrets about our new friends will be vital. What are the rest of you looking forward to when we get back home?"

"I can't wait to see my parents again. I never realized how much I would miss them if I was gone so long. I'm sure that they're missing me as well. Especially my mom who always wants my help in running the house. I actually am looking forward to cleaning my room and mucking out Stormfly's stable."

"We're eager to get back and show everyone that we're not mindless crude thugs anymore! Who knew there were so many other activities we could enjoy if we stopped trying to hit each other all the time."

"That doesn't mean we won't miss out on causing a little destruction now and then. It wouldn't be the same if we didn't blow up something once and awhile."

"I'm sure Berk is looking forward to the return of your destructive ways. I'm looking forward to falling asleep in my own bed and being able to walk around without an escort. Xanadu may have many luxuries, but I wasn't able to enjoy them as much as I liked. I think the thing I will miss the most about Xanadu will be the hot springs. They were so relaxing it felt like all my troubles slipped away as I soaked."

"I'm sure we can rig a hot bath for you son if you miss warm bathing that much. Once we get home we'll have a feast in the Great Hall to celebrate your return and our new alliance. There will be enough drinking, song, and games to last a week. After that its back to getting Berk running smooth as a weathered stone. I hope in our absences the Outcasts haven't made a bid for Berk. I swear by Odin I'll rip Alvin apart if he's tried to harm anyone."

"Calm down Stoick, I'm sure that Berk is just fine. The most we'll have to contend with is Spitelout not wanting to give the chiefdom back to you after such a long time. All that power probably went to his head, but it will be fine I'm sure."

In the skies above the dragons were also talking gamely about what they would do once they returned home. This adventure had been fun and as much as they enjoyed strengthening ties with their cousins it would be nice to be back home. Dragons may migrate for different reasons; food, shelter, raising hatchlings but in the end there really was no safe harbor like home.

_ "Once we return to Berk I'm going on long deep sea dive in the waters. I loved the warm waters of the Mediterranean and all the exotic fish. Still nothing compares to bracing cold swim in dangerous waters and battling Scaldrun if I do say so myself. Besides I'm sure my fellow Thunderdrome Roar has been missing me." _

_ "I can't wait to get back home to check on how the rest of the pack is doing. I'm sure the Terrors having been causing mischief and who knows what our offspring have been up to now that they're teens. I know my brood love to cause problems if they don't get their way." _

_ "We're looking forward to flying in the forests once more. Its fun to knock over trees and play Dragon Nest with our riders. Maybe this time we'll win the game." _

_ "I hope they've finished building the rest of the structures for our kind. My shelter is nice and I love sleeping on fresh hay. Still Astrid could make some improvements." _

_ "I want to practice my battle skills! The fight with the Daypeaces should me I still have a way to go to become a true threat. Now that Snotlout and I are communicating better we might have a chance to beat all of you during the upcoming Thawfest games. Then I'll show you how much strongest Nightmares are compared to Nightfuries." _

_ "In your dreams Hookfang! Once we get home after I take a long nap I'm going to go trick flying with Hiccup. Now that he knows what flying really feels like we can come up with all sorts of new tricks that will show you up any day of the week!" _

_ "I would ask that you refrain from attacking one another until we get to the Gateway. You'll need to conserve all your strength if you want to make it back home as soon as possible." _

_ "So stop hissing at one another and start flapping some more!"

—
They made it to the Gateway by late afternoon about an half until sunset. Steiner and Ula quickly went to work repositioning the quartz crystals altering the flow of magic. The other dragons helped change the amount of light entering the focusing lens while the Vikings worked the etchings. Finally the Gateway opened the path and they sailed through landing back in their own home waters. After making sure the Vikings could sail home safely the two Honor Guard members turned around back through the vortex to home.

Two days later their victorious return was celebrated by a fiery salute and cheers as the people of Berk saw their leader return with their heir. Spitelout and Stoick embraced one another as the riders parents fussed over their children. The dragons were having excited conversations with one another. Hiccup found himself the center of attention as Bucket and Mulch asked him a ton of questions.

Later that night a grand feast was being held. There were plenty of food and drink being shared. Songs were being sung and everyone was cheering loudly. Stoick raised his hand getting everyone's attention. "Now, I know your all eager to learn what happened on our voyage. Over the course of the next few days you'll all learn the whole story, but for now I'll will give you the highlights of our journey. The Daypeace Nissa kept her word guiding us through the vast oceans and mythical portals. We arrived in her home waters and did battle against the greatest of foes; a group of blood thirsty poachers who would have stopped at nothing to claim our dragons for themselves after beheading us. We battled with all their fierceness of the Gods emerging triumph it. After fixing our damaged ship we landed on the island of Xanadu and hiked through the dangerous terrain. At one point it seemed we had been betrayed for Nissa had kept secrets from us, important ones. I was ready to take out my anger on her, but she convinced me that she was on our side. All seemed lost when the Queen of Xanadu refused to return Hiccup to us. We fought as bitter enemies nearly killing each other if not for the bravery of Hiccup, Toothless, and Nissa who saved all lives. The girl was badly injured though to my son she'll live and we have a new alliance. I understand the trepidation of working with such beings I believe though if we can learn to live in harmony with dragons we can forge a friendship with these beings. They have offered us great gifts which will be shared with the people of the village. For now we celebrate our successful quest and toast our new friends!"

"For Hiccup and Toothless! Yeah!"

"Boy, I never thought that many people would miss me. I guess I'm more popular then I thought huh bud?"

_ "You're worth more then you'll ever know to the people of Berk. When your not here this island is very dull. When are you going to start giving lessons in Dragonese?" _

"Soon, I still need to get use to my new prosthetic. I have no regrets giving up my leg to help out Nissa of course; its

just..."

"We know its a hard blow to gain something back only to lose it again. Still you made the right choice," Astrid told him gently.

"Yeah and anyways you look hotter with the battle scars. That fake leg tells the story of your strength and determination against all odds," Fishlegs responded.

"Blah blah enough with the sap, let's have some fun. I bet I can guzzle down more mead then you can!"

"Count us in we never walk away from a challenge."

"I'm going to enjoy this so much."

For the rest of the night Hiccup joined in the celebrations even managing to hold down one drink before he got to tipsy. As he settled into his own bed he felt a sense of warmth and safety blanket him. He was finally home. He didn't know that his father watched him sleep all night to assure himself that this wasn't a dream, that the boy was in fact home. Over the course of the next week or so life on Berk returned to normal. The glass was installed on the well in the town square for everyone to enjoy, Gothi was busy studying the new medicines she'd been given and the riders tested out their new outfits. It seemed all was well though the teens were glad that Fishlegs got to distracted to update the Book of Dragons. Between the trouble Heather and Alvin caused it was a huge relief that they didn't have to be concerned about the Draconia Daypeace's secret getting out.

Meanwhile back on Xanadu Nissa was in another study session with the tutors. Since becoming the heir to the throne she was learning all the protocols, world cultures, and how to harness her magical potential. At first it had been very hard for her to keep up with the lessons. She had to master etiquette, languages, and expand on her own abilities fairly quickly. Though as the weeks passed it soon became apparent that she was not only excelling in her studies, she was actually surpassing them with such ease.

"So Princess what can you tell me about the Middle Kingdom and who are connection is there?" the tutor asked quizzing Nissa.

"The Middle Kingdom is also known as China is ruled by an emperor whose legacy is passed down the male line. Each era of the country is marked by a different dynasty many who are involved with the completion of the Great Wall which has been erected to protect the country from their northern neighbors the Mongolians. The country itself uses a kanji system of symbols similar to runes to represent sounds and ideas for their written word. The people of China are very proud and have an honor system. The oldest male is the most important member of the family with the daughter having their feet bound at seven or six in order to keep them small. Woman are generally seen only as necessary to run the household and not valued very much. Dragons are revered in this culture as wise protectors and teachers. The elemental dragon of lightening merged his essence with the mountains, lakes, and spiritual temples of this land creating the wingless dragons who defend the country. We have established a working relationship with these protectors. In exchange for resources

from their country such as its kites, fireworks, and teas we offer trade including our scientific discoveries, food, and clothing. We also assist the dragons with defending their land from rogue mythos who would do the people harm."

"Correct and what is the proper protocol when addressing a high ranking official in this country?"

"Bow at the waist and advert eyes while speaking with reverence. Do not respond until addressed. It is customary in the country to kneel for long periods of time."

"Yes, and how many dialects are there in the country?"

"Over thirty dialects exist in this country, but the two main versions spoken include Mandarin and Cantonese."

"Excellent work Princess Nissa. I've never had a student who was such a quick study before."

"Its nothing really. My parents and I would often play trivia games with me for fun."

"I see, well why don't you go practice your light magic for awhile then? I need to speak with the Queen about your progress."

"Of course; thank you for the lesson today tutor Keto. It was very educational and informative," Nissa responded giving a slight bow/curtsey before going outside to the training field. The Honor Guard was assembled helping her focus and use her powers. Nissa had already learned how to transmute light into different colors and use the sun's power to increase her own abilities. Now she was practicing using its power to fire beams of pure sunlight to destroy targets.

Observing the training session from the balcony was Queen Rayna who looked at her niece proudly. Never had she imagined in such a short time that Nissa would surpass all expectations placed on her. It seemed that without her knowledge the rest of the family had trained Nissa to become the next queen should anything happen to them. She had never been so grateful for her sister's ability to plan ahead than she was now. She heard Healer Skerry enter the room and turned to look at her friend and confidant. "Nissa's doing quite well fitting into her new role hasn't she?"

"Yes, she seems to have over come her self confidence issues. I've never seen her shine like this before. She is positively radiating and truly happy for the first time in a long while. The people of Xanadu also adore her and feel at ease knowing the two of you have finally bonded with one another. I must admit I feared the two of you would never connect. I'm glad I was wrong."

"To think all this time we could have been sharing our love with each other instead of growing more distant. I will always regret pushing her away for the longest time. I only hope she can forgive me."

"I believe she has, Nissa has a very forgiving heart. She understands what you were going through. Together you've both begun to heal and leave your hurt behind."

"Yes, as we draw closer together I can't help but feel how sad she really is. She hides it well of course. I'm not saying she doesn't love being here learning how to be a princess or growing closer to me. She's just lonely. She has many people she can talk with and does interact with her peers, but she hasn't formed any strong bonds with her age mates. The closest she ever has was with the riders. I can hear it in her voice when she talks to Hiccup how much she misses him and visiting the island. She's always asking questions about the other teens and chatting up with the other dragons."

"That's understandable considering how much time she spent there in the last fifteen years. It's a much a part of her as Xanadu and the Daypeaces are. Despite how opposite Vikings are from us she formed a kinship with the teens there and has embraced much of their ways. Perhaps she should be allowed to go on the first trading expedition in a few months."

"I was actually considering a different solution," Queen Rayna told her friend. Her Dragon Heart connected with her niece's sending her love and warmth that caused the teen to smile. "Ola had a saying. 'if learning to love is about growing closer, then its also about letting go'. I think I need to do what is best for Nissa." Healer Skerry looked at her confused by what she meant.

It was three days later and the teens were all the the Dragon Academy discussing what their plans to start introducing the younger generation to training dragons. They thought that if the kids learned more about dragons early on then it would be easier to bond with them once they reached their teens.

"So I was thinking that if we managed to corral a pack of Terrors in here we could let the kids have some fun with them. The Terrors aren't that dangerous and seem to enjoy playing with the kids at any rate. Afterwards we can start moving up to other dragons," Hiccup was saying.

"Sounds like a plan. When do you want to have the first session?" Astrid asked.

Before he could respond they heard an alarm go off. Startled they looked up at the sky surprised to see three Daypeaces circling above heading for the town square. From the markings they identified them as Nissa, Ula, and Steinar.

"Whoa what are they doing here? Did Nissa tell you she was coming for a visit?" Ruffnut asked.

"No, I'm as surprised as you are."

"Well let's get down there and see what's going on," Tuffnut urged as they all mounted their dragons and flew to the square. The whole village had gathered with Stoick looking at the guests with a mixed expression. The three dragons landed and reverted to their human form just as Hiccup and his friends arrived.

"Steinar, Ula, I'm surprised to see you here. I wasn't expecting to see your people for another four months. Is there a problem?"

"No problem per say Stoick. We've come for a different reason. Ula, the proclamation?"

"Ahem, by order of Queen Rayna of Xanadu; Princess Nissa Draki is to begin her first cultural peace mission. This entails spending the next five years living on the isle of Berk learning from the Hooligan tribe and assisting them in daily life and not limited to helping further the bonds between humans and dragons. The Princess is also responsible for learning more about our northern neighbors in attempt to bring peace and understanding the north. While here the Princess is to be treated as an ambassador of her people with all the rights afford the position while still subjected to the rules of the Chief Stoick the Vast Haddock. The tribe will offer their protection of the heir who will be guarded by elite members of the Honor Guard who will take up residence on said island. Upon completion of mission the princess will return to her homeland with an ambassador from Berk for a period of time to be determined at a later date. With your permission we would like to carry out our orders."

"Your serious? You want to spend the next five years here on Berk? I don't understand, what about your people, your aunt? I thought you were learning to be the next heir and..." Hiccup started babbling when Nissa silence him with a look. She had returned to wearing her old outfit with a new cloak to protect her from the cold.

"My aunt thought it would be best if I was with my friends for now. We're still connected and I can talk to her anytime I want with the mirror. I already have learned much about being the next heir and I will return periodically to my home, but for now if you'll have me I wish to be part of this tribe and learn from you as you have learned from me."

"I see no reason not to accept you and your bodyguards on the island. You have already proven yourselves as worthy allies and it would help strengthen our alliance. We can set you up in a home near the forge and you can help the kids out at the academy. It will be hard life and at times it won't be easy, but if you three believe you can handle it then we welcome you to Berk."

_ "Welcome to our home Nissa, its good to have you back!" _

That afternoon they all went flying together laughing as the sun danced off Nissa scales as she twirled about. The friends were happy to have their newest member back and it looked like the adventure was just beginning. As Hiccup and Toothless raced against their friend trying to see who was better he couldn't help to think about the situation. _We once thought it was impossible to be friends with dragons and now we are. Its funny how things can change. My friendship with Nissa was my oldest one I had, but now its grown to include her and all my other friends. Things have changed for the better and I can't wait to see where this new journey leads us._

End
file.